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CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE CONSCIENCE

BY THE
REV. JAMES TAIT,
AUTHOR OF "MIND IN MATTER,"
AND "THE PRESENT DANGERS TO RELIGION."

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CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE CONSCIENCE.

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW.

The churches that pridefully call themselves Catholic continue to hold fast the necessity of penitence as the condition of absolution, and the necessary relation of conscience to penitence. This is as it should be ; nevertheless, by some defect of working a leak has taken place by which 200,000,000 of those whose forefathers belonged to the Latin branch has left it apparently for ever. This can be let alone, as there is more pressing business nearer home. Of the 200,000,000 people who may call themselves Protestant, about 100,000,000 seldom or never enter a place of

worship ; a fact surcharged with danger to the social fabric, and which is creating anxiety in all sincere hearts. The present volume is an attempt to point out the cause or causes.

The ministers of Protestantism are sincere, simple-hearted Christian men, who go to the pulpit on Sunday convinced that they are doing God service, and accomplishing all possible good by expositions of the spiritual therapeutics of the New Testament ; which amount to what lectures on therapeutics, such as are given to medical students at college, would be in hospitals filled with the diseased and dying. Bodily disease demonstrates itself by pain ; spiritual disease demonstrates itself by sin ; and sinners are the jolly sets in every branch of society. Should it not be necessary to inspire a becoming gravity in immortal beings who in spite of themselves are playing for time and eternity.

Miracles did a good deal to give the Christian religion a footing in the world ; but there

was an influence more potent than the miraculous—the facts brought to light by the Revealer from the eternal world. The two most impressive preachers of the ages did no miracle. Their leverage was the future : by making use of the future in time Jonah brought Nineveh to the dust and ashes of repentance. The Baptist by the eternal future brought the nation to which he belonged to his baptism in the Jordan.

Protestantism has failed to the extent it has by neglecting to cultivate the conscience, and refusing to appreciate its relation to repentance, conversion, faith and good works. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is one long, loud lesson on the necessity of an awakened "conscience toward God." But the abounding "charity that thinketh no evil" takes for granted that under the dispensation of the Spirit souls are all athirst for the gospel, and that its facts are like an attractive bait to the ravenous fishes. God grant that the tens of

millions of shysters may be an eye-opening to the Christian ministry !

The complaint, however, is not that the preaching has been insufficiently harsh, but that it has been insufficiently loving and tender. From the modern pulpit there is no absence of exhortations to love, but they are delivered in tones that betray no surplus emotion of that kind. Jesus treated sinners with the utmost possible tenderness. The minister who feels his responsibility—who reflects that what he utters is to tell for endless ages, one way or the other—will weigh well what he has to say, and will say it with sympathetic affection. Impressions from the eternal world filled the heart of Jesus with compassion and His eyes with tears : “ Hadst thou known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are forever hid from thine eyes.” No amount of smartness in the pulpit can be a substitute for the touching utterances inspired by the thought of plucking

“brands from the burning.” A minister of the gospel is not primarily a director of social ethics.

It is to be hoped that all who see eye to eye with the author of this book will come with him to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

When a church fails to get a firm hold of the ground reasons and motives of Christianity its religion can become too sweet to be wholesome. The condition in which so much of the substance of the great body has been thrown off and become outcast may be called the diabetic state. It is to be feared, however, that in spite of all considerations those who “hold the fort” or remain in the churches, will refuse to tolerate a style of preaching that can stop the leak and that can tell on the outcast multitude. From present indications things are destined to get worse instead of better ; for the better class of churches have begun to experiment on the road to ruin

in spite of the lesson of ages—the calamities entailed by even limiting future punishment. During twelve years in which the author has had opportunity of hearing the gospel in different countries he has never heard a sermon from which the effective eternal had not been eliminated, except one. Is there not good cause then, for casting a pebble, and if possible making a ripple in the dead sea. It may be replied that “perfect love casteth out fear;” but where is the perfect love ? imperfect love and the absence of fear have filled the whole Christian world with outcasts. Let it never be out of sight that opinion on the importance of religion, it is, that gives importance to the Sabbath day and to Sabbath services. Laying down the laws of duty to sinners is not the whole of Christianity ; and it can be done without a particle of sympathetic love.

THE CONSERVING PRINCIPLE.

In religion the tendency to go wrong is chronic ; the entire history of the world, and a great deal of the history of the churches, prove it. So that words of warning can never be out of place.

Whence the necessity for so many new religious societies ? Endeavourers, Young People's Societies, Young Men's, Young Women's Christian Associations, societies for deepening the religious life, etc., etc. ? What do they all infer ? That people, in general, are getting better ? Or, that they are in danger of getting worse ? and that religion is in the shallows ?

One of the things they do imply is : defect somewhere in the working of the established religious machinery ; or, in plainer words, that preaching is a comparative failure. From

the close of the 2nd century onward the tendency of churches, in general, has been downwards towards demoralization. The object of the writer is to point out the cause, as far as possible, by illustrations drawn from the present.

The gospel ministry in cities is at length brought face to face with the results of the religious teaching on the rising generation ; and complaints are bitter indeed. In regard to the absorbing devotion to sport, newspapers must bear their share of blame : because putting sporting clubs on a par with the first institutions of the land, and a successful sport on the very pinnacle of glory. Then anything the newspapers might do for religion by reporting Sabbath work is effaced by the ever expanding records of ongoing on the Saturday previous.

Natural consequences of this attention to sport are that a religious service has to be changed into one of the amusements of the

week ; and churches more and more into places of amusement—concert rooms for secular songs and recitations ; eating houses, with their kitchens ; in one case a school for the “ noble art ” of self-defence. Efforts to identify the church with the world will end by the triumph of the world and the death of religion. The house of God is a temple sacred to religion ; and to defilers Jesus applied a scourge of cords.

Luckily the proprietors and conductors of newspapers in Canada are as a rule religious men, churchgoers, and are thus amenable to religion if faithfully presented ; so that the refrain must ever be—a neglectful ministry. It is the immortality of the soul and its possible destinies, chiefly, that necessitates a church ; when revealed facts about the everlasting future are ignored, the necessity for churches ceases to be felt, as it is by the rising generation.

The writer has mentioned cities : it would

be well if optimistic Synodal reports on the state of religion in general had appendices prepared by committees of country shopkeepers. There are unreliable people in the country as well as in cities, and proportionately as many of them. In general where have commercial crises their starting place ?

The Japanese are considered a very shrewd people, because they adopt the material products of Christianity, including explosives and other implements of war. Yet as a nation they reject Christianity itself. But should it be surprising ? Christ proclaimed peace on earth ; the Christian nations are ever on the alert for war, and mostly to be waged against each other. Nor is this all, Christians do not believe in their own faith ; their religious books teach one thing, for example, that God made man out of the dust of the ground ; but the science of the Christian nations contends for something altogether different ; the posi-

tion now adhered to by some of the wiseacres of the pulpit.

The mistake in Japan has been in experimenting with methods that have made the leaders of thought in Christian countries infidel to their own religion ; which is, letting the fact slip that the first step in Christianity is an awakening from moral declension by a consciousness of its dangers. In order to salvation, the conscience of a nation must be aroused ; a fact recognized in the terrors of Mount Sinai, and by the voices of the original heralds of Christianity. Once bring the conscience of the Japanese into living action by sufficiently heralding the day when the secrets of men are to be revealed and judged, and Christ will become a necessity ; until then, the felt need will be for the latest improvements in ships and artillery.

Were our knowledge of the earliest ages of the world, those that preceded and those that followed the deluge, as intimate as of the age

in which we live, it would be found that then too a dead conscience tolerating a dead faith and accepting doings, in general, very shady, ones for the fear of God, was the first step in the "*facilis decensus*."

To re-establish the authority of God is the chief present object of religion ; the instrument the Cross of Christ, but comprehensively understood. Belief in the supernatural is rooted in human nature, all efforts to uproot it unavailing, because attempts to uproot nature itself. Everything that lives and breathes proclaims the Invisible and Spiritual ; and belief in the possibility of intercourse with the other world has been as universal as faith in its existence.

Prayer is worship in the highest, but the Being who can hear prayer to purpose must be both omnipresent and omnipotent, with an ear open over the earth wherever man dwells, and a hand outstretched for help. But in the light of this position what absur-

dities have occupied the imagination of mankind : gods, men and women, “ four-footed beasts and cheeping things.” It is, however, because even human ignorance feels that all life is evidence of the Absolute Life : but blunders by putting one for the other.

Some of the superstitions of the past have a strong hold on the imagination of multitudes still, and the identification of Christianity with them has originated efforts to extirpate faith in God, the only possible source of intercourse with the Spiritual world. The most shameless attempts ever made to extinguish the Supernatural have been made in modern times, and by men who were children of the churches ! What does all this mean ?

A living faith is a loyal faith, which will never admit that in the smallest measure the Bible needs to be trimmed to the imaginings of science ; it will hold that “ God is true if every man should be found a liar.” The

peculiarity of faith is that it tests the Rock of Ages as a foundation on which to rest. The source of eternal Life must be reliable. Contact with Christ enables the soul to say, "Whereas I was blind now I see ;" and the result is an unshakable confidence in the Book that mediated in the contact. Far too many of those who consider themselves and who wish to be considered men of light and leading, are disposed to yield to the scientists ; a premature faith in men who know not God and obey not the gospel of His Son. The Author of nature knows more about nature than the scientists.

Again, as in the past, the chill of a faith distancing from Heaven is secularizing the churches by stimulating them to carry too much head through ambition of display. If the Apostles had borne any earthly resemblance to this so-called succession, each one of them would have perpetuated his fame by a cathedral that could have outlived the Pan-

theon. On the contrary, is there the trace of a building that was a church in the Apostolic age ? The cathedrals were an upshot from the revival of heathen civilization. Taste is one thing, exorbitant crushing expense and ecclesiastical pride are not so praiseworthy. Still, it must be a consolation to any church overwhelmed with debts that the Reformation was brought about by the effort to raise money for the completion of St. Peter's !

For the sake of any who think that fine churches and " beautiful " services have much to do with true religion, it may be well to recall the fact that the fatal decay of Israel began in the life-time of the man who built the Temple, and was started by himself ; also that degeneracy in Christian times progressed with quickened steps during the centuries the great cathedrals were in process of construction ; so that at the close of the period Reformation became a necessity. Religion is a humble plant, a lily of the valley. It is

to be hoped, however, that after a while the growing taste for artistic displays will end by as happy an eye-opening. In the meantime, as in the past, the music of the churches is a lullaby singing the conscience to sleep, as the gorgeousness of ceremony once crusted it with a thick Italian enamel.

To far too great an extent again churches in cities are seeking their standing from art, and from displays of wealth, and from the amounts they can raise for various purposes. The last is one of the mistakes that is intensifying the overestimate of money everywhere. Money is needed, but where religion is concerned caution is needed too. The anxious thoughts of the business man are engaged about money all the week, and if on Sunday in the house of God he finds money a leading consideration, is it surprising that secularity and corruption are on the increase in public affairs, among electors, and among men who buy their way to position. There

are distinguished saints now as there ever were, and probably more of them, but nevertheless, the public is deteriorating.

When our Saviour commanded His disciples not to let the left hand know what the right hand did, He had the best of reasons for doing so. If an act and the motive from which it proceeds have to be hypocrites to each other, the effect on character must be bad. In the sapient wisdom of the closing years of the nineteenth century the printing press is the chief organ of Christian liberality, and the results are the chief evidence of improvement in religion. They are the very opposite ; religion dies, and the credit of liberality takes its place. The opinion of an authority who holds the vantage ground for observation the bishop of Toronto does, and who appointed new year's a day of humiliation for the growing worldliness, should make all who have the welfare of their fellows at heart pause and think. The success of church

collections is no argument against the position taken. The preservation of society from corruption depends not on displays of liberality, but on two things—human and divine justice, the Courts of the nation and the Court of Heaven. When churches neglect to proclaim the eternal justice of God, they have become useless.

But it may be asked, if in the voluntary system clergy could get a living without the published lists? Far better, because they would be forced to do their best to inspire gratitude to God. The liberality of Pentecost was elicited by the discovery that Messiah was the Author of eternal salvation—an eternal and not a mere temporal benefit, as they had supposed. The published lists are drifting religion into the shallows while soothing the decaying conscience with bogus pretensions.

If Christ had condescended to give reasons, another might have been that giving

thus stimulated would be overdone, and would tend to pauperize ; in fact, would give rise to a dangerous socialism, as it did at Jerusalem and is doing now. In proportion as the churches are substituting flash for simplicity, a Sunday pastime for instruction, in the same proportion is liberality instead of personal service emphasized as the imitation of Christ. The same thing happened in the long ago ; but did it do the nations any good ? did it not rather promote their decay. At the Reformation a very large proportion of the property of some countries was found to have passed into the possession of the church. Were the nations benefitted ? did it do the church any good ? Except that it led to a victorious revolt. As yet matters are only on the way.

The world can be said to be both better and worse since the boyhood of the writer ; better because there is perceptibly less drunkenness, but worse because the motive for moral reform is interest and not the fear of

God. The consequence is that in an age of great reform worldliness is carrying the day, and unscrupulousness as to the means of getting money. The fear of God, and not as the enemies say, the dread of hell simply, but the awe inspired by the consciousness of the Infinite Mind is the mighty instrumentality the Spirit employs in rooting up the weeds that threaten to choke the word. The opinion of the incoming generation of young men on justifiable means of getting wealth is sad to think of. Bryan and bogus money are flaming object lessons for learners everywhere on this continent.

Georgism is another fraud. George is a man who has no land, while his neighbour has, and who has invented a trick by which he can burden his neighbour to relieve himself. For revenue purposes transfer the valuation of a city like Montreal to the land on which it stands, and at once you create two values, the market one and the outrageous one imposed

by the assessors, compared with which the unearned increment with the original value added would be a bagatelle. But the unearned increment is the profit on all commercial transactions ; why let them escape, and deprive the owner of land of his gains ? Georgism is just another effervescence from the undercurrent of dishonesty that is flowing hither and thither throughout this continent, and is sapping its foundations.

He who of old said, "The fear of God is not in this place," saw clearly where the safety of society lay. The vitality and usefulness of churches are not in the amount of money they can extort, but depend on a clear apprehension of means by which this conserving principle can be kept in vigor. Christ came to establish "the Kingdom of God," of which little is heard now, the Cross, in general, being used as an appeal to the selfish instincts. Salvation is one of the immunities of the Kingdom, as good works are its fruit, Jesus

uniformly put the Kingdom first, and when doing so His opinion of insubordination was a very serious one ; in giving it He used such expressions as “ Cast into outer darkness,” “ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The quotation of a quotation by “ The Montreal Daily Star.”

MONEY RULES AMERICANS.

“ Ian Maclaren ” Tells His Congregation of
Recent Experiences in the United
States.

LIVERPOOL, May 31.—Before his congregation in Sefton Park Presbyterian Church, Liverpool, the Rev. John Watson (Ian Maclaren), took for his subject his recent American experiences. The Sunday newspapers in the United States, he said, were an

unmitigated curse to the people, and London was to be congratulated on the failure of the attempt to introduce the innovation there.

The one thing which above all others startled him, Dr. Watson said, was the power of the secular spirit in America, and the weakness of the Christian church. Men were devoted to money and money-getting in a way and to a degree which he could not have imagined possible.

The churches in the United States, he continued, were conducted, to a considerable extent, as large business concerns, money-making permeating everything. In many districts he found congregations consisting almost entirely of women.

Dr. Watson eulogized the vivacity, intellect and energy, the boundless resources, high hope and confidence of the American race, which he declared to be one of the most promising of the Anglo-Saxon branches. The readiness of rich Americans to build and en-

dow educational institutions he considered a matter for national pride.

The latter part of the quotation is somewhat contradictory to the rest. It would be much more just if successful Anglo-Saxons divided up with their employees, so that they, too, might save for a rainy day or old age.

Another quotation of a quotation by "The Daily Star" :

A LAMENTABLE DECADENCE.

The startling figures given of the decadence of the Christian religion in Vermont and New Hampshire are paralleled by those of Massachusetts. According to the president of the Revere Lay College, "In south-eastern Massachusetts, in 31 towns, almost two hundred families have not the word of God, and nearly three hundred families are without any religious books. In this section forty out of every

one hundred families of Puritan extraction have left the house of God and have no connection with Christianity, while many more are the merest borderers on it."

These facts are openly criticized by American newspapers, as evidence of a drifting into paganism. It was once said that there was no Sunday west of the Rocky Mountains. Shall it also be vaunted that there is no religious worship in the land which was pioneered by religious enthusiasts? The bare contemplation of such a possibility is enough to shatter Plymouth Rock to its very foundation.

These quotations are given because Canadians are more and more ruled by United States religious methods. The day may come when a God besmeared all over with honey will edify men, but that day is not yet.

THE CROSS COMPREHENSIVELY UNDERSTOOD.

Were the effects of sin and ill-desert bounded by this life, or even by a limitation in eternity, the Incarnation would never have taken place. The penalties would have been allowed to exhaust themselves. The eternity of punishment justified the advent into the world of a divine Person in human nature. To secure a new representative of the race who was competent to reverse the fatal consequences entailed by the lapse of the original one was the problem, and to do it by the same principle of representation.

It was Jesus who revealed definitely the eternity of punishment. He dwelt on the subject oftener than any other inspired person. He did it as a justification of His presence in the world. Why was He here at

all, "Immanuel God with us," if not to grapple with a difficulty of infinite magnitude? God's opinion of disobedience to a well understood divine command is expounded by the far-reaching consequences in this world, extending to the whole race and during its continuance; but it is not at all evident that its visible effects exhaust its penalties. At any rate, if they did the Incarnation would appear to be a superfluity, a consideration not sufficiently weighed by many.

As the Son of Man, the Son of God could not but be the Representative Man, because the Lord and King of men. "When He bringeth the first Begotten into the world He saith let all the angels of God worship Him." Infinitely greater than the whole race His life and death became beyond estimation a satisfaction for the breakers of the law, and is available for all who conform to the conditions—who repent and believe. If, as some contend, repentance is the only atonement

God requires, then it will follow that the dispensation of mercy cannot be limited to this life, which is more than equivalent to the opinion that has made the Church of Christ a ruin almost from the first.

But as an Infinite Representative, the sufferings of Christ pre-suppose the substantial infinitude of the deserts for which they were substituted. The intimate connection between eternal punishment and the Incarnation is often made very apparent by those who persistently shut their eyes to the eternal aspect. Unconsciously they prepare their way, that is, if at all logical, for the somersault into Socinianism. For years one of the noted revivalists of America went hither and thither proclaiming the tearfulness of God, until the point of view bulked so largely in his thoughts as to shut out every other ; and to-day he is no longer B. Fay Mills, the Presbyterian revivalist, but B. Fay Mills, the Unitarian.

It was by the old road to Unitarianism trod-

den by so many Presbyterians as well as Congregationalists. People see no danger in dwelling exclusively on an attribute so benign as the goodness of God, while shutting out the circumstances and method of its manifestation. God, however, foresaw the danger when He prepared the Old Testament and made it an Introduction to the gospel. It is on account of the importance of the Priesthood of Jesus that priesthods and sacrifices occupy such large space in the Books of Moses. They were to be done away, but the facts typified remain for ever, as the most important of all for time and eternity.

The facts of the Old Testament, too, are permanent revelations of the character of God ; the benign and the vengeful, the Flood, the fate of Sodom ; even the extermination of the Canaanites, looked at in the light of effects of the neglect to accomplish it fully. On the benign side there are facts of greater note ; in the present age there is

no disposition to overlook them. But the mission of Christ, on account of its magnitude, which cannot be exaggerated, fills many minds with the idea that while God is a fountain of generosity, He can be nothing else. God commands that His mercy be published everywhere, and enjoins mercifulness instead of the spirit of revenge ; but in mercy He also requires that notification be given of the doom awaiting the ingratitude of impenitence and unbelief. While the gospel is for all nations, the motives of belief are the two eternities. This is the awakening.

In similar circumstances God will be the same "consuming fire" He ever was. Allow the history of the Jews in the fall of Jerusalem and ever since to tell its tale, and let the prophecies bearing on the fate of the New Testament churches be heard. And the facts: those terrible calamities inflicted in gospel times calculated to fill the impenitent with awe. Their object is a merciful one—to keep

the conscience of the Christian nations awake. Where this is not done the gospel has a narcotic effect, and moral reforms without God and apart from the pulpit become the order of the day. "God delighteth in mercy" and "judgment is His strange work," strange because not nature, but nature violated demands it.

At one time, when ministers understood their vocation better, it was very common to make large use of the Revelation of St. John as a source of gospel themes. This was wise, because it is Jesus on the throne with whom souls have to do now, a fact clearly made known, but concerning which information from the pulpit is given in scant measure. In comprehension the gospel must embrace the divine human life in heaven as well as the divine human life on earth, because the former is the complement of the latter. A promotion has taken place from the Cross to the Crown. In the thought of many Jesus is still as in Na-

zareth, or Bethany, or Gethsemane. True, the Son of Mary was and is an expression of divine love to the world. On earth His whole life was centred on this purpose. As a man fulfilling His assumed responsibilities, He had nothing but love and pity and rebuke and forgiveness for His followers, and He set them an example of humility that they should walk in His steps. To-day He occupies the throne of Heaven, a Judge and a Saviour; the throne from which He will judge the world. A judge can pity the culprit he sends to prison or to the scaffold ; but justice is a stern counsellor. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as King and deal wisely, and shall execute judgment and justice in the land." (Jeremiah xxiii., 5.) At the present moment Jesus is a heavenly Judge in all the earth. See, for example, His verdict on each of the seven churches.

Channing, Strauss, Prof. Seeley, Renan

and many others have undertaken to give the dimensions of Jesus, but in each case it was an attempt to measure the ocean with a coconut shell. His dimensions are in the Bible, and there are no other possible lines of measurement ; all else contract to the insignificance of the individual reasoner, which is the result of every attempt to be wise above what is written, and to chisel Jesus into the stature of a philosopher. As the facts are all within the Bible, in order to know Him fully it is necessary to take all of them in, which none of the philosophers have done, always excluding any which refused to harmonize with pre-conceived whims.

Now, is sufficient importance attached to the fact that the pitying victim of Calvary is on the throne of judgment ? The pardoning function has to be safeguarded with caution even when exercised by Heaven. The Book of Revelation exposes the style in which Jesus can speak to apostate churches and apostate

souls, as well as to those who are not apostate. This, however, can be said of the new dispensation as a whole that its legalisms are mercy ; it is not mercy to withhold the truth and allow consciences to sleep the fatal sleep. Pity wrung from Jesus His revelation from the eternal world. When the revelations are withheld by misplaced tenderness hearts at length become changed into stone. Exclusive proclamations of love seem calculated to have an opposite effect ; but they have not.

In opposition to the Scripture : “ He that spareth the rod hateth the child,” many educationists contend that bad boys should be overwhelmed with gush, that the worse they are and misbehave, the more affection should be showered on them, which is exactly of a piece with modern experiments in the pulpit. Together these foolish experiments are converting the nations of this continent into unreasoning and unreasonable children, who cannot be satisfied unless they get the advan-

tage of their neighbours in everything. The young should be thoroughly warned before they have had time to sin away their day of grace. Then their faith in eternal punishment will be expressed in blasphemies.

The late Professor Drummond discoursed expatiatingly on love. Good and true, where love exists ; but Christian love is not a spontaneity, nor can it be begotten by word of command, far less by speaking about it. It is the result of a process, often a very painful one. The incrustations of sin which imprison the affections have to be broken up by an awakening of the conscience. God's love to the world was revealed by blood, and God's love begets love in such alone as see the Blood in appreciation of its value.

The Professor's discourses on the power of love are valuable in as far as they are expositions of the New Testament. The "beloved disciple" wrote on the same subject exhaustively ; but mark this : they were not designed to be his last words ; if so, they had

been as inefficient as those of the Professor. For a benefit to all ages he was compelled to portray the other side of the character of Jesus. Is there not instruction in the fact that the preacher of love was singled out for this work ? Was he in danger of becoming one sided and a hobbyist ? In Patmos he was awakened as out of a reverie by His former friend now in glory. Do the sickly sentimentalists who simper about the love of Jesus really know the Exalted Redeemer ? Have they studied His utterances from the other side ? If to what Jesus spake when on earth is given divine importance, surely equal importance should be granted to what he has spoken from the heavens, especially as it is with Jesus on the throne souls have to do now. After all, there is not so much difference between the Immanuel of the prophets and the Immanuel of St. John : is there any ? And for luridness, is there anything in the Prophets that surpasses St. John's description of the coming woes ?

DANGER SIGNALS.

Were the religion of the Bible not the most effective instrument for good, and were there no danger to society from defective views this subject could be dropped without disadvantage. But the mistakes are telling unfavorably on legislation, on respect for the laws, and on the execution of law. In ante-reformation times the churches aimed at instilling dread of the ecclesiastic. The Reformers abolished this, but substituted a far more powerful motive—the fear of God. Men are influenced by both love and fear ; but far the greatest number by the latter. The fear of God comes in not when men are disposed to do right, but when they are disposed to wrong.

To a dangerous extent the “ Reformed ” seem to have forgotten that to make this fear prevail is one chief object of the churches.

The effect is shewing itself in various ways ; in a growing disrespect for the Sabbath day by the great corporations, and by multitudes besides ; a disrespect that killed religion in France and Germany, and that is killing it rapidly in many other countries. Thirty-five years ago one newspaper attempted a Sunday edition ; to-day there are 700 Sunday newspapers in the United States, and some in Canada. It is also shewing itself by unscrupulousness in business, such as, for example, depreciating or enhancing values by lying reports, and by paying dividends on borrowed money or withholding dividends when made for a similar purpose ; also by divorces and remarriage of the divorced ; also by incendiarism for insurance ; also by corruption in politics, and a consequent disrespect for laws ; but perhaps most strikingly in the growing disregard for human life and sympathy with criminals.

In North America there must be at the

very least 100,000 murderers in existence, else what can have become of them ! According to the last published report, there had been within the year 10,600 murders in the United States, and in the previous year 9,500 ; and in the two years there were between three and four hundred executions, probably many of them negroes. From failure to execute the unrepealed law of God murders have so multiplied that to execute all murderers would look like massacre. And things are always going from bad to worse, which cannot but be. "Blood it defileth the land," a defilement that can be removed only "by the blood of him that shed it." The defilement is in the minds and hearts of the people. As the perverted pity only fosters murder, Christians should infer that a stern sense of justice is one of the Christian virtues. Indignation against crime purifies the moral atmosphere. The Moasic Law gave the people a chance to express their sentiments against a criminal by stoning to death.

In another form contempt for human life and God's law has shewn itself for many a day, and among church-goers as well as others. Ever since the revolt of the Colonies their predilection has been for France rather than Britain, a mistake that has avenged itself by a great curtailment of the oldest elements of the population. Our attention was first called to the painful subject about the commencement of the civil war, when on a mission to the Western States. Among others who called on him was a pious lady, a most agreeable person, who seemed to be very frail for her age. An acquaintance, an old countryman, asked if I noticed this debility, and if I knew the cause. It was drugs, and he asserted that as a rule child-bearing in America was left to the immigrants and their immediate descendants. A terrible indictment against a Christian people. Nor is the crime altogether confined to the Protestants either in France or America ; there are facts at command to convince of the contrary.

And is it possible that in spite of all special efforts, by Christian associations, multiplied by the dozen, such practices are being introduced into Canada ? What is needed on this continent is not the butter-tongued evangelist, but the cry of the Baptist repeated in thunderous tones in east, west, north and south. The blood of the slaughtered innocents will be avenged ! The gospel ! what does the gospel amount to when there is no awakening for it ? And mark this, that the male sex is not the only one disposed to crimes of the blackest dye. Put women into the places occupied by men all along the line, and it is doubtful if they would not exceed men as criminals. There is a lesson in the story of Eve and her lost influence.

Durant ! Durant ! For three years the name of that villain was sounded before the public every day. Was there not a providential object too ? A terrible crime had been committed, and the criminal condemned, and

there was the law's sympathy for this worst of criminals ! Was it not well, too, that the attention of the whole world was directed to the danger of the constant meeting of the young of the two sexes in churches to make amends for the danger arising from a muzzled pulpit. The muzzle is put on by the people.

Durant was a Canadian ; this and other similar facts inform the writer that in criticizing the United States it is necessary to hasten slowly, and to exercise a prudent caution. If Great Britain has had a work of civilization on its hands, the United States has had as great, if not a greater one. If Britain has gone into all the world, all the world has come within the portals of America to be civilized. The work to be done, in training the victims of despotic countries to constitutional government, would have swamped any other country on earth. The foundation of success was laid by the gospel in the minds and hearts of the earliest settlers ; therefore, let it continue to

be preached in the old style, which recognized the fact that the mission of the Son of God was necessitated by the eternal effects of sin. Wherever these consequences are set aside, the nations are sinking in corruption and imbecility. What is needed now in all countries is a new and fresh grasp of the gospel from the point of view of its ultimate origin. So much has been written about religion that the attention of students is so tasked by what is called "learning" on the subject, that the ground facts have passed into the dim distance so as to be unseen.

TARRED ROPE FOR ENGLISH.

A Respectful Request from London That
Americans Temper Adulterations
With Mercy.

LONDON, May 31.—The Telegraph announces that in articles of food imported from America are many adulterations. Official

analysts have made the appalling discovery that tarred rope is freely utilized in the manufacture of the ginger of commerce ; that pulverized clay is lavishly mixed with the flour supplied to unsuspecting Britons “ for household use.”

Corn-starch figures as a copious adulterant of powdered sugar ; ground-up cocoanut shells are extensively sold as prime buckwheat flour ; jellies are made of applecores and parings, blended with glucose, and butter is compounded of tallow and marrow. Condensed milk, on the other hand, is preserved by means of wood alcohol, which—being strenuously poisonous—is admirably calculated to abridge the lives of its unwary consumers.

“ Despite the recent recrudescence of Anglo-American amity,” says the *Telegraph*, “ and its tempting promise of an informal alliance, in the coming by and by, between the two great English-speaking nations, we are only too well aware that the time-worn

axiom, "There is no friendship in business," still holds good on both sides of the Atlantic, and will probably continue to do so until the crack of doom. Nevertheless, we cannot help thinking that those of our American cousins who occupy themselves with the preparation of food intended for our consumption, might temper adulteration with mercy."

The Canadian Government is on the alert : and it needs to be.

But, from England, too, comes a loud call for the Baptist. It is conscience that reveals the necessity for Christ ; it is the conscience dead that can be placated by rites. Prayers for the dead ! What does that mean ? It means that a church fallen from its Christianity is forced to send its members into Purgatory instead of into Paradise. Baptismal Regeneration makes another probation necessary, because regeneration by baptism does not regenerate, and therefore does not prepare for heaven.

Consubstantiation ! Then Christ divided His material substance among the disciples before His body was broken and His blood shed. Then, is the stomach to be the receptacle of Christ instead of the heart ?

It would be wise if Ritualists would attend to the meaning St. Paul gives to the substantive verb in Gal. iv., 25. Will they be disposed to contend that Mount Sinai was Hagar transubstantiated or consubstantiated ? “ I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” (John vi., 35.) The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” (John vi., 63.) “ What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before ? ” His blessed body beyond reach.

Still, if some put too much into the Supper, it is possible that others take too little out of it. Christ is an Omnipresent Person, who gives Himself, with all He is and has, to the

consciousness of the worthy partaker at the moment of participation. A confused notion of this seemed to agitate Luther, to whom it might have filled the bill had it presented itself forcibly to his mind. "This is eternal life to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent."

A late popular London preacher of the same denomination as the writer wrote in an autobiography that in his opinion the finally impenitent would reach an end of their suffering by falling asleep. Just another illustration of the tendency in many quarters to set at nought the plainest teachings, even of the Master, when they conflict with human opinion of what God should be. The intervention of the Infinite in salvation is the unanswerable argument against all such vacuities. If the desideratum is consolation in impenitence, it cannot be got.

Should it be surprising, then, that a moral subsidence is taking place in "society" on the

other side of the Atlantic too ; betrayed by such straws in the wind, as treachery in games of chance in the very first rank of society, by the horrible revelations connected with that mountebank, Oscar Wilde, and later still, through those made by the " promoter," and by secret commissions. Conscience must be in process of extinction, else why should the venerable Archbishop of Canterbury find it necessary to re-establish a place of future probation for England ? It must be because most people he knows seem to him unfit for heaven, if he considers them too good for hell. Baptismal Regeneration has an innocent look; so had Dr. Pusey.

" Procrastination is the thief of time," but is found a thief of eternity also. The most stimulating words in the Bible are, " Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." If the English adopt Purgatory, which amounts to probation in the future life, in less than a 100 years the nation shall have passed

the dying stage, it will be dead. It is the real source of degeneracy in what Lord Salisbury calls the decaying nations. Some people, and among them, his lordship, think that the source of decay is the confessional. But why? Because it is there the eternal consequences are removed, and the penitent made immune from them. If absolution to the dying took off the temporal consequences of sin, then souls would go into Paradise, and there would be no need of masses for the dead.

If any do imagine, they may mistake in imagining that the "priests" exercise a sinister personal influence. The ministers of religion of all the denominations are well-intentioned, good men, the elect of the elect. Those designed for ministers of the Catholic Church are the very pick of the people. At school, with one exception, who was too good to live, and who died in early life, the saints among the writer's early companions were boys intended for the priesthood, and who

afterward became Catholic priests—the best behaved boys he ever knew. But the leverage is taken from their influence by absolution, which presupposes that in all cases repentance is genuine, and which the “penitent” at any rate takes for granted. God does confirm the absolution of the sincerely repentent, but refuses absolution to all others.

The Church of England, we are told, is a “comprehensive” one ; but surely not as comprehensive as the one established by Constantine, which weakened the Roman Empire, and prepared it for its overthrow by the Barbarians ; or as it established for the barbarians, which necessitated the Reformation. Churches must embrace members with imperfect ideas on Theology ; but surely the clergy should be fenced within the test of a standing and falling church—the doctrine of Justification by Faith. This is the pivotal article of our holy religion, as it was also the pivotal doctrine of the Reformation.

But what, it may be asked, of Russia, with whose ecclesiastics the ritualists are ambitious to fraternize. Russia is a nation of thieves ; anyone who has lived there knows that it is all but impossible to get an honest servant, and the upper classes are as thievish as the commonalty. Moreover, every jack in office is a tyrant and a robber. If Russia is not considered a decaying nation, it is because its situation is such that other nations cannot get at it. The day will come, however, when the British after a great victory will strike Russia at her centre and proclaim liberty to the nations of which she is made up, and Russia will fly into a hundred pieces.

When compared with Protestantism, the oneness of the vast Roman Catholic Church is striking, which has led many to doubt if Protestantism is Christianity at its best. But while Roman Catholics are one ecclesiastically, they come far behind the Protestants in the matter of national unity, or the ability to

inspire it. While both were Catholic, England and Scotland were always at daggers drawn ; Protestantism united them, and has kept them one ever since. Until yesterday Italy was a land of fragments, and were interested parties listened to, it would soon be a land of fragments again. If the South of this continent could coalesce as the Protestant States of the North have done, South America would become one of the great empires of the world. Why do they not coalesce? Because the republics see little to admire in each other, and have as little cause for self-admiration. Their history is of chronic rebellion, because the men to whom power is committed are so unprincipled that the people lashed into fury end each successive government with fire and sword.

Instead of dividing into two great parties as in Britain and the United States, the Catholic nations split up into irreconcilable groups, hateful and hating one another. Traced back

the reasons are that baptism does not regenerate, and the prospect is held out of a better chance for improvement in the future life.

The best friends of the Province of Quebec regret that members of the Legislature even have to admit that there is a strong tendency to what in South America has unfitted the people for self-government—the difficulty, indeed the impossibility, of getting a majority of upright, honorable men for the conduct of public affairs. They are openly accused of accepting bribes.

His holiness the head of the Catholic Church, recognizing this moral weakness, has recommended a moderate acquaintance with Scripture, evidently under the impression that this is the source of the greater trustworthiness of public men in Protestant countries. He is right ; but there is a specific lesson in the Bible that has a specific value above most others. If, just as an experiment, his holiness would withhold from Catholics, for, say a

period of 50 years, or what would be equivalent to a generation, all privileges in the eternal world except what are adjudged to Protestants, even his holiness, if he lived, would be surprised at the result. If there are men in the Council such as people say there are, it would be most interesting to see a kodaked view or picture of the City Council of Montreal assembled to hear from St. Peter that they, with all bad Catholics, were reduced to the level of bad Protestants, and would land with them in hell for their unprincipled conduct. His holiness would be astonished to find that the measure of regeneration they had received by baptism and the new degree of holiness they had obtained at Confirmation, and the share of Christ they had got at communion, would be forced to scintillate out with a vigour they had never betrayed before; indeed, it would be strange if the suddenness of the surprise would not work out a degree of repentance that might demonstrate itself

by restitution : some of them, in fact, might become saints, because St. Paul says : By the terror of the Lord we persuade men—that is, to repent and accept Christ.

At the same time, it must be noted that the subjects of his holiness are only accused of taking bribes ; it is the Protestants that give them. The writer does not undertake to weigh the guilt of the two, of the giver and taker, of the tempter and tempted ; but this he has to admit, that for some reason the pass has been reached that when a modern Protestant can hide his shame and lose his individuality by becoming a member of a Corporation his conscience becomes extinct ; money is his fad and dividends his incense, so that it has become a common saying that Corporations have no souls. Except someone chosen as a blind or an instrument to go between and corrupt others, all the members of our great syndicates are members in good standing in Protestant Churches, one of the

telling evidences that the Protestant pulpit has lost its power.

It is a common remark among Protestants that "nobody believes in hell now." And so it seems. But if even Christian countries cannot dispense with prisons and penitentiaries, should it be thought strange that God cannot dispense with hell. Some think He can, others think He should, and some are so sure of the latter that they believe He has. Many influential Christians in past ages came to the same conclusion, and changed the nations into hells on earth. They also continued shutting off the temporal effects of sin by indulgences and other expedients until the cry became universal for a reformation of the church in its head and members.

SCEPTICISM.

Then what is to be inferred from the fact that during the whole generation the Science of Christian countries has been atheistic, or at least anti-Christian, putting law above the plainest statements of the Bible ? Does it not infer that religion has lost its power ; that, in short, it has ceased to implant the fear of God in the budding minds ? The fear of God is the beginning of unending wisdom, because it awakens a necessity for Christ, whom to know is eternal life, and in whom he that believeth hath the witness in himself. Any who by experience know the great central facts of the Bible cannot but believe the rest. This is the reason why uneducated people often know much about religion of which the educated are ignorant, and the reason also why they become authorities

on the subject, while the educated, who have never put the matter to its only test, are not. The test of the Infinite Mind is the contact of mind. "Come unto me and I will give you rest."

"Necessity is the mother of invention." Men must feel a need for God, before they seek and find Him. The divine nature has two sides. For more than a generation there has been distaste for the more awe-inspiring and effective one, no doubt among men unwilling to experiment with faith and make their peace with God. At any rate, there has been failure to present God to the public in the inspiring manner in which He has been pleased to present Himself. It might be well to find out what churches are most responsible, or should be held responsible for the sceptics.

It does not seem that any of them can be held responsible for Darwin personally. Thomas Carlyle said that he knew three gen-

erations of Darwins, atheists every one of them. In spite of possible denials, Darwin's object in life was to underpin the negations in which he had been indoctrinated, and, if possible, by science, falsely so-called, to knock the bottom out of the Sacred Scriptures. The Bible point of view is of a Personal God revealing Himself by personal acts ; as man made in the image of God reveals himself ; those acts put forth long before as well as well as after, and at the creation of man. If divine manifestation by law only is a fact, then there has been no open revelation ; but by open revelation it became known that the laws were created, so that where Revelation is unknown the Creator is unknown. The emphasis put upon " Law " is to make it a " pons assinorum " to stagger the imbeciles. Has God ever said, or who is it that says that God will never suspend the laws of nature to shew that He is their Author ?

Darwin's writings are not dangerous to

religion in themselves, as his conclusions are not contained in his premises, but are the work of imagination pure and simple. The little changes he gathered from all over nature were parallel, and not cumulative, amounting to the production of one species out of another, of which he failed to find a single instance. If it were known that occasionally a sheep produced a kid, or a goat a lamb, or a horse an ass, or pigeon a chick, such things would suggest evolution, and in fact would prove it ; but varieties to which Darwin always appealed prove nothing, because a variety of the sheep is still a sheep. When a new species appeared it could not be as a variety, but as an anomaly. Evolution, therefore, supposes that the life of the world was built up by anomalies, of which there is not a particle of evidence in the nature that we know. The danger, therefore, lies in admissions by men who have no skill in weighing evidence, or penetration to distinguish be-

tween the products of an abnormal imagination and facts.

The law of life, according to Genesis i., 24, 25, is that like produces like. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast after its kind ; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after its kind, etc., etc. But if, as evolutionists say, God made one creature out of another, he did not make them after their kind. As the Bible is committed to this position, it is necessary to find out what can be said in its favour.

We have to admit to the evolutionists that the fishes of our lakes, rivers and streams resemble each other : perch, chubb, trout, bass, pickerel, pike, grey trout, etc., as much indeed as do the kine of the various countries, or the dogs or pigeons, and look as if as nearly related. But put the kine of the world into the same great field in perfect freedom, and their peculiarities will soon disappear. The

fishes are perfectly free in their native element, always were so, and yet by "natural selection" they have acted as if some Moses had given them a law and enforced it as a religion. The kine grew into their many characteristics in separation, by climate and feeding, helped by artificial selection ; but no such separation ever took place in the case of the fishes, so that their peculiarities were formed when in free juxtaposition. Sea fishes differ greatly from each other, which at once suggests created difference ; relatives in the enjoyment of free intercourse could never have so differentiated themselves.

Then, what is true of fishes holds equally of the denizens of our forests, many of them resembling each other very closely : squirrels, rats, weasels, minks, muskrats, ground hogs, martins, racoons, foxes, wolves wild cats, wolverines, lynxes, etc. They have formed themselves into specific groups while living together in perfect freedom in the same forests

and by the same streams. The same thing is more striking in the case of the feathered tribes, because in their case locomotion is more untrammelled. While resembling each other closely in form, they obey the law of some Moses as strictly as if so many tribes of Jews. For example, take the wild ducks that come in swarms to our lakes and rivers in autumn, and it will be seen that their summer breeding has been according to the strictest rule. According to geologists, birds are broken-up liazrds, which reminds of one of their number who discovered clear proof of the evolution of the horse on a continent where there never was a horse till imported. "Most fools" Carlisle would say.

The point is the supposed original formation of specific groups out of near relatives, first and second cousins, etc. Equally inexplicable are the differences among the trees that constitute our forests, some of them going the length of bearing fruits and others nuts of various kinds and sizes.

It may be replied that the various groupings must have taken place when the incipient continents were groups of islands like those in the Pacific ; but for incalculable ages, according to sceptics, the human race has been scattered over the islands as well as the continents of a world. Nevertheless, the unity of a race remains intact. The objection, however, cannot apply to birds and fishes.

On the other hand, it may be thought that like would naturally draw to like by natural selection ; but it must not be overlooked that while each creature saw all the others, not one of them saw itself, for the mirror is a human invention. No ! evolution is not the suggestion of anyone brought up face to face with nature, and familiar with it ; it is a suggestion of the proverbial Cockneigh.

Faith in the Creator embraces a vast conception ; none feel this more than the atheists do : too vast to be held fixedly except as the result of irrefragable evidence. But

accept the Bible as the exposition of a process or logical method, admit the recorded manifestations of power and foreknowledge, and the unshaken faith of the Jews is explained, and the theme of the Bible established : "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In the wisdom of God a witnessing nation was chosen, a jury ; the verdict of that nation written ineffaceably in their inmost consciousness is : "The Lord He is God; the Lord He is God," It was hard to convince them, the record admits that; but examine the process and weigh the result, and the conclusion engraven in their mind will be yours.

We submit one illustration of the lame conclusions reached by men who venture on great mundane subjects and changes while refusing to accept light from heaven intended to elucidate them. During the whole of this age a glacial period extending to something like 20,000 years has been dinned into the

ears of the passing generation. The evidence is boulders and boulder clays found in many places up to within 20° of the equator. But does the Bible not supply a far more feasible explanation than a long period of inexplicable cold ? During those protracted frosts what became of the animal and vegetable kingdoms ? The relics of the ice age connect themselves with the very last great operation of nature, as they lie on the surface of the world, above all the stone formations. Before they were put where they are, all the animals now extant on the earth were in existence. What became of them during all those polar summers and winters ? Twenty thousand years of frost ! And the vegetable world ? What became of it ? What hot-house was provided for its preservation ? Ten years of such cold or the half of it would have swept everything that had life from the face of the earth.

Faith in the old reliable Book of Genesis

would keep the scientists from stultifying themselves when meddling with subjects beyond their grasp. The Deluge, as described, could not take place except as the result of a breaking up of the earth's crust, of which there is evidence in most places. The immediate effect would be a great overflow of water, and the effect of the overflow a detachment of the ice masses of the polar and subpolar regions. In some cases the animals of the tropics have been carried into the far north ; all would depend on the direction of the currents. Genesis takes for granted that a good deal of animal life would be endangered, and it tells how the danger was met. How do the scientists meet the danger to it bound up with their scheme ?

As the Flood together with the account of the ark is considered one of the incredible wonders with which the name of God is associated, is it strange if in divine wisdom it has left traces of itself that are general and un-

mistakable. Indeed, a universal deluge could not take place without registering itself, and it should be said rather that God chose a judgment for the race that would leave imperishable memorials of its infliction. At one time sceptics laughed jeeringly at the story of the Tower of Babel ; but since attention was called to the Pyramids, early structures in the land of floods, the laugh has been somewhat modified. No doubt the Tower of Babel was intended as a refuge while the Deluge rested like a nightmare on the human mind. The Tower is a credibility because the story of the flood is true. The objection suggested by the water overtopping the highest hills can be met by the supposition that the great mountains of the world were elevated in the upheaval that produced and then retired the Deluge.

Having, as it were, unearthed a pedestal for the Book of Genesis, its other statements stand out in the light of day as infallible truth. And the existence of the Jews as a

nation of believers in the invisible God is a self evidence for the rest of the Bible as striking as the relics of the Deluge.

In the stratified rocks there is abundant evidence of a progression in life ; but there is no evidence that the inferior produced the more advanced. It is just here where interpolated imaginings have found their temporary justification. It took a geological " day " to bring the animal life of the world into existence. This looks very like evolution : a Creator, it is supposed, would have finished the work at once. The conditions, however, were bad for evolution ; a constantly falling temperature would have had a stunting effect on life, as temperature, above all other conditions, tells. The adaptation of life to temperature necessitated the " day " of Genesis. The fur-bearing animals would have been ill adapted to the " day " when coal was in the forming stage.

The writer was attending a geological class

in Edinburgh, when a French savant announced that he had found clear traces of man in the "boulder clays." The lecturer was discoursing on the "clays" at the time, a subject with which the writer had become pretty familiar in Canada. Instead of sympathizing with the Scotch professor in his wrath, he thought that as like as not the Frenchman might be right, a suggestion fortified by later experience since. By careful examination of the boulders in Canada, he has satisfied himself that they must have come from afar, as they do not belong to this part of the world.

It is changes in the watersheds made by the causes of the Deluge that create the impossibility of locating the Garden of Eden. As to a cap of ice at the south pole causing a deluge, it would be counter-weighted by a cap at the other pole.

THE ELENCHOS.

The Mediator of Salvation looks for help in two important functions—to awaken the slumbering conscience of the world, and to keep it awake as the governing faculty. The pulpit is the spiritual lever, all other instrumentalities sinking into insignificance in comparison.

Hearers of the gospel can be ranged in three classes—those who are influenced by the reasonableness of religion, and the argumentative ability of its advocates ; those who are led by the tender affections ; and, by far the largest number, those who, as in the natural life, are moved by anxiety and fear. A considerable proportion of this class neglect religion because the motives they are able to appreciate are kept carefully out of view.

Missionaries complain that the heathen are

unable to value the love of Christ ; a moral defect, fostered by neglect on their own part, of the elenchic of the New Testament. St. Paul's persuasive was "the terror of the Lord." "By the terror of the Lord we persuade men." Therefore, his initial appeal was through the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment. He did not begin his task of saving the unconverted by asking them if they loved Jesus ; he knew too well that they could not do it. Even the Master never put the question, "Lovest thou me," except to an old disciple. What people need at the outstart is "conscience toward God" and a refuge from guilt : love to Christ wells up from between the horns of the altar.

Divine inspiration has made the conscience a special attention, hence the prominence of commands (Mount Sinai), of warnings and penalties. This age is inclined to look askance at such expanded portions of the word of God, because unable to reconcile them with

false conceptions of the Messiah. But a pair of weeping eyes with nothing behind them but fountains of tears alone, can never be effective with a perverse race that deserves chastisement more than pity. There is a fitness in things that cannot be safely set at nought. Religion may yet lift men above the need of warnings ; but it will be when they are nearer heaven. Three years of profusive beneficence left Jesus almost without a friend. When compared with Moses, his failure in life was conspicuous, a lesson, indeed, on the necessity of the Holy Spirit to give even His words effect ; but the facts are illustrative of human nature.

Formerly, in the native country of the writer, a sermon was considered incomplete until the hearers were classified and a word of earnest, kindly warning addressed to the unsaved. This was considered as an essential part of preaching. The remarkable thing came to be that, although the services were

entirely unadorned, they were better attended than in any other Protestant country ; it became known as a land of Bibles, of strict Sabbath observance, and of church-going. Clear light from the eternal world made available by the New Testament did it, the rays so profusely shed by the "Sun of Righteousness." Where these are judiciously employed, there is no need of falling back on the showy tricks of the Middle Ages.

The contents, however, were suggested by life-long experiences in America. For many a day, probably ever since the germ of Universalism was begotten, there has been a distaste for conscience disturbing truth. The natural man, as a "citizen," has demanded a better footing in regard to heaven, and the spur has been lost. In course of time great religious mistakes tell on the public, and on the published public, and not for good.

The menacing crisis that faces many so-called Christian countries in which the rich

and poor stand at arm's length, has been brought about by long neglect to enforce a gospel which by its divine justice puts all men on a level before God ; and therefore instils a fellow feeling among companions in spiritual misfortune, and that are equally possible heirs of eternal life.

The peculiarities of the divine nature brought into play by sin make exhibitions of justice the road to mercy, divine mercy, human mercifulness. Men need to be taught consideration, the poor as well as the rich, and the rich as well as the poor. Therefore, while on earth Jesus was the advocate of justice : "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of joy above thy fellows." (Heb. i., 9.) But the office of the Redeemer is better understood and will be more effective when His whole history is brought within view, the portions treated by the old prophets and by St. John. A de-

finest section of His great life—a most essential one—His humiliation—is now expanded to sum up His whole biography.

Anyone familiar with the story of Mamre, and of Him who came to foretell the birth of Isaac and to destroy Sodom, will have little doubt as to who it was that gave forth the first promise and then drove the parents of the race out of Eden; or who from the “bush that burned” gave Moses a commission against Egypt in favour of Israel ; or who spake from Sinai ; or who the Angel Jehovah of Joshua was. “No man hath seen God at any time, the Only Begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”

But some one will exclaim : surely Messiah could not so speak that Moses had to say, “I exceedingly fear and quake !” No ? Was it not in the presence of Jesus in Patmos that John fell as one dead ? And who issued The Revelation as a permanent Sinai for the churches ? On earth Jesus spake “as One

having authority and not as the scribes.” Since then, the last of the prophets describes Him kind, gentle, loving to all who accept His authority ; but terrible to the obstinately impenitent. “ Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” (Jesus, Rev. xi., 16.) “ Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds ; and I will kill her children with death ; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the hearts ; and I will give unto every one of you according to your deeds.” (Jesus, Rev. ii., 22, 23.)

As religion makes labor a duty and success in life a blessing divine, if the future beyond time is not impressed in its tremendous proportions, labor is apt to become a religion, and gain godliness. But the Son of Man comes in as a compensatory counter attraction, not heaven, but a Person, and not a Person as a

complimentary card to a social entertainment, but One whom to love is the holiness of heaven.

The Birth and Death of the Messiah are infinite expressions of God's willingness to save, pointed appendices to the goodness in nature ; but must not be construed into a possibility of salvation independently of them, as if God were less indifferent to the claims of justice. The change, if any, is all the other way. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath considered the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace." (Heb. x., 29.)

If this is legalism, then it has the divine sanction. But why object to legalism in its place ? If more deference had been paid by Christians to the Old Testament, which is, to a large extent, a history of the condemna-

tion of images in worship, the churches would have been saved from their greatest lapse. Moreover, if the nature and objects of the paschal sacrifice had been investigated, neither transubstantiation nor consubstantiation would have been heard of. More still : The Law came by Moses, yet Moses left behind him the best generation of Israelites the world ever heard of, a generation not excelled by any of any Christian country in any age. How was it accomplished ? By divine impression on the consciousness of the nation through manifested judgment and mercy, blessed by the Spirit : such impressions as preaching can now produce in the absence of the external experiences.

What an amount of precious time is spent by the clergy in scouring after wandering sheep ! And yet, when occasion offers in the house of God, what opportunities are let slip of making them know the value of the soul by its possible loss. Pulpit subjects

in general or the hobbies of theologians and their philosophies of religion are of small account to such people ; what they need to learn is the value of salvation. The truth on both its sides should be fearlessly proclaimed, whether men hear or forbear ; but in general they will hear. In the experience of nations, church attendance lags in proportion as honest preachers are displaced by others that are not so.

As for church services and music, they should be fitted to attract the poor as well as the rich, the learned and the unlearned ; not the rich only nor the poor only. They should be such as are calculated to keep both in the same folds. The “ dalmatica ” worn by the “ priesthood ” is said to have been brought from Dalmatia by a Roman Emperor. Let the travellers into foreign countries and foreign churches keep their dalmaticas. The monotonous chants that had “ mystery ” for their inspiration it is becoming the fashion to imitate ; for what purpose ?

For the safety of society the "kingdom" should embrace all—the foolish as well as the wise virgins. Is the object to make the wise ones feel not at home? Then for some reason in many countries most of the foolish virgins are outside of the folds, without the oil and without their lamps. This is the danger line passed ; they are out of control and a danger to the nations. After 1900 years the true religion that has God behind it merely shares the world with several other great isms, a fact that awakens doubt ; and in many countries where the Bible is accepted as the rule of faith the majorities are outside of the churches. It would require courage to deny that some great mistake has been made.

Few can doubt that one of the futurities is to be a life and death struggle between the revolutionary and conservative forces. Already in most places the laboring world has to be coddled out of fear, because not governed inwardly by the fear of God. For a

despotic world the true religion is necessarily revolutionary ; but the danger lies in those whose aim is not liberty, but license, and who are often a threat in countries where the fullest liberty is enjoyed. Above other honours achieved by the Queen is that of securing the respect of the world at large during an age when revolution has been in the air, and disrespect for authority from the parental upwards. Given a monarch of a different stamp on the British throne for any considerable portion of 60 years, and it is almost certain that there would not have been a crowned head in Europe to-day. Her Majesty has shed a halo around thrones.

The Salvation Army and other energetic people have done much to limit crime among the criminal classes ; but if the truth honestly told can do such things, on the other hand, what effect must withholding it dishonestly or denying it have in the long run on what are as yet the non-criminal classes ?

The denial of miracles is a denial of what was intended to impress the immanence of God ; all other heresies tend the same way : their object is to efface divine impressions, hence it is of their essence to disorganize.

It is the contention of the author that in spite of appearances, there is at present a strong undercurrent of spiritual decay, the consciousness of which is producing unprecedented attempts to check it. The writer is only one among tens of thousands of co-workers each in his own way. The work of shepherding the young men and young women is fast passing out of the hands of the regular clergy ; but the new shepherds are not fully alive to the reason why societies are necessary, of which neither Christ nor His Apostles gave any intimation. It has been neglect to inform the young why an almost incredible divine intervention became necessary for their salvation. The fear of God would do infinitely more for them than " Christian Asso-

ciations." The writer overheard a prominent member of the Y.M.C.A. of Montreal at work on another youth, and telling him that if he did his duty as far as he knew it, he was on the road to heaven. The zealous worker was more than surprised when told of the New Testament way.

Christian workers there will be ; but as there must also be a field to work in, the vast majority will have, as always, to serve the Lord by diligence in business and fervency of spirit. As everyone of them, however, will be expected to drop a word in season, surely it can be done without forming societies of "word droppers." If done to glorify the church's one Foundation, it should be in honour of the Church of Christ, which, of course, does not mean this church or that. While the world lasts there will be divisions in the church as there are regiments in an army ; in Patmos Jesus spake to seven churches. The divisions have secured and maintained relig-

ious liberty. A prevailing church can become an intolerable despotism.

In America theology is on the down run among the masters of the situation. They are not the clergy now, they are the men and women that hold the purse strings. A late noted pulpit orator of New York has a successor who likes to put himself in evidence; unless the current changes, there will be many such wretched successors chosen ere the generation passes away. Should it not inspire anxiety for the future that sceptical teachers in schools of Theology, the fountains of religious lore, can generally hold themselves securely in position through the monied support, backed by the press. Granted that there is much lay exertion in connection with religion, it cannot be denied that physical energizing has often been concurrent with religious decay. "Not by might, nor by power, saith the Lord." As has been already stated, thirty-five years ago a single newspaper attempted

a Sunday edition : to-day there are 700 Sunday newspapers in the United States.

And to come nearer home, has the appeal of a late renowned statesman to obtain a standing in this world for the next, from a foreign priest, for one of the most conspicuous of the Reformed churches, not significance enough to fill people everywhere with anxiety ? a bewilderment of the imagination expressed in very plaintive language by another wanderer : " The night is dark and I am far from home ;" also by cravings for recognition from the Russian Episcopate ? Religious excitement working in the imagination is one thing, an awakening of the conscience is quite another. Conscience when enlightened by divine justice creates a necessity for Christ ; an excited imagination may end by being satisfied with Mahomet. A dying conscience is the starting point of all heresy.

There is much cause for anxiety, too, on account of the books that become immensely

popular. They are not such as tend to enliven the conscience by presenting the true gauge of sin, but that tend rather to soothe it in its fatal sleep. Novels that are flavored with false religious views become immensely popular, especially if the writer is a minister. Then it might be asked : did the views of the mild-mannered author of *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* prevail generally, what harm ? Would mankind not be bettered ? Yes, if material Pantheism is a reformative ahead of Theism. Put physical laws in the place where the Bible puts the Will of the Supreme Being, and where are you ? To the present generation it scarcely needs to be proved that the connection between materialism and anarchy is intimate. The source of power in religion is : “ God with us,” and not God away at the back of the laws.

In the long ago made known by profane history public order was maintained by the fear of God, or rather as they said, the gods,

inspired by the terrible experiences of still earlier times, no doubt ; and to-day the only hope for the future lies in the fear of God, and the only agency capable of establishing it is the Christian ministry ; and the one instrument is the Bible. Is it not because the fear of man prevails over the fear of God that such armies have to be kept up by Christian countries for protection against each other ? Why is it so ? Chiefly because the institution created by Jesus Christ to maintain His fame and fear has labored to depreciate the instrument put into their hands to do it with. All the so-called Catholic churches have done this, the leading pulpits of Germany have long been at the work, and for many a day the echo has been caught up and sent on by others.

The Germans ! The greatest people in the world ! Ah ! compared with the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free the Germans are serfs, fitted to be ruled by the drill sergeant. The Bible is the charter of

human liberty, and that charter is the whole Bible, and not the portions suited to the Old Adam point of view. The apostle of the Gentiles kodaked the critics when he made the statement : "The natural man receiveth not the things of God; they are foolishness to him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The critics generally have been men who refused to put Christianity to its only test—of experiment.

Once before in the long ago there were vast armies such as exist now ; let the perpetual desolations tell what the result came to be. After the nations had been all but wiped out, God took Nebuchadnezzar in hand and taught the knowledge the wiseacres are at present laboring to efface. The information came too late except for the far-off future and faith in it may come too late now to arrest the impending dangers. The mention of Nebuchadnezzar suggests the strange perversity of some minds—that the existence of

buried cities under Babylon should be quoted in disproof of the Bible ! also that the ruins contain evidence that there were believers before Abraham ! one of the things Genesis demonstrates.

All along, the history of the church has been one of alternate heats and chills, periods of revival followed by long periods of spiritual decay, brought about by doctrinal and practical mistakes that let the conscience fall asleep. Many live under the pleasing impression that at last we are in the full current leading to the millenium, and that there will be no cause for anxiety till the thousand years are over. The young people of America have taken hold, and in their enthusiasm will force things uphill in spite of Providence and its exaction of conscience conviction and determination to recognize the pulpit. They will leave no room for "a falling away first," but like real Americans will have their way and carry their point. And the women have

put their hand to the plough. American women ! Just consider ! But just consider another thing or two, that the Armageddon of St. John or the decisive struggle of the West is still away in the future, and the Armageddon of Ezekiel or the decisive battle of the East cannot take place till the return of the Jews, a thing just coming into sight.

In fine, is it not a bad omen that nearly the whole secular press is Adamite ? A minister of religion who is ambitious of notoriety has only to deny some important article of faith and the church courts are paralyzed by the rage of the newspapers in his favour. By treating Christian doctrine as an incubus, the press is bursting the bonds that bind souls to do the right. It is Christian doctrine that nourishes Christian morality ; even the doctrine of Reprobation is a living, spiritual force when rightly understood, as the decision of the Executive of heaven to let the law take its course. Then the power of church courts

to maintain doctrinal standards with little friction is well illustrated by the history of Methodism, which allows no deviation and keeps its clergy well in hand. By strict discipline this body has kept closely to the same line of doctrine longer than any other church, the church established by the Apostles scarcely excepted. Other churches in these disorganized times would do well to learn a lesson.

BAPTISM AND REPENTANCE.

Recently a luminary from New York City created a sensation by boldly denouncing the manner in which most of us were baptized. But coming from such a quarter, what ought to have created greater surprise was his denunciation of creeds, a part of the oratorical display listened to by the public with indifference.

It is hard to comprehend how a dislike for creeds can exist where there is even a casual acquaintance with the history of the early centuries. For just in proportion as they were creedless they were notorious for many deviations of the most egregious kind from the teachings of the New Testament. The teachings of the early councils have been chained anchors fixing the moorings of the vast majority of Christians from then till now,

the unreflecting orator not excepted. In illustration of the value of ecclesiastical definition, or rather of the loss entailed from the want of it, how different would the history of religion have been had as scriptural a definition of "Justification" been made as of the Trinity and associated subjects. While the "Fathers" had a firm grasp of the Incarnation, they never mastered its logical results. An intelligent faith in "Jehovah Zidkennu," "The Lord our Righteousness," would have saved the churches both East and West from many fatal missteps. The baptism of repentance necessarily connects itself with doctrine. If any opinion as to either its form or subjects requires a repudiation of doctrine, there must be mistakes at the back of it.

The newspaper controversy on baptism which came up as a result was of considerable value, as it demonstrated that nothing very conclusive on the subject can be got from the dictionaries. One of the contest-

ants proved satisfactorily that the word means to immerse ; the other, by as solid examples, that it means to pour and to sprinkle. It has both meanings, or rather all the three. The consequence, what ? That here as elsewhere the Bible must be accepted as its own interpreter. The form and subjects, especially the form, must be gathered chiefly from the significance of baptism, or from what it appears intended to symbolize.

If water is employed to signify a virtue coming down from heaven, will it not be necessary to lift it up and let it fall ? The coming of the Spirit and its representation met at the baptism of Jesus, the sign and the thing signified. John went down into the water with Jesus. What did they do when there ? The Holy Ghost was about to descend in the form of a dove and rest on Jesus. How was it possible to figure this by water ? By plunging Jesus into the Jordan ? or by lifting a handful and letting it fall with a

rapid motion of the hand to signify frequentativeness (izo) ? The Spirit comes like the wind, in gusts.

But it is replied that baptism signifies, and must figure out death and burial as well. (Rom. vi., 3, 4.) Give a guarded look at the passage that it may not be misquoted. Buried with him in baptism is not the language in full ; it is buried with him through baptism into death ; so that the death of Christ is the emphasized and the prominent thing, and not His entombment. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." It was on the Cross that He said, "It is finished." Entombment He did not shrink from : He had no need.

But in what sense could His crucifixion be a baptism ? A sufferer on the Cross was baptized with his own blood ; and water as well as blood flowed from the Redeemer's side. While baptism is by water, it holds a reference to the blood and the application

of its virtues, and notably it is called "the blood of sprinkling." The burial custom of the Church of England which accompanies the words, "dust to dust and ashes to ashes," with the application of a small quantity of earth, is taken from the Jews, and by both it is called burial. As baptism signifies cleansing also, water is substituted for earth with propriety.

But baptism is also a planting. "Planted in the likeness of his death." In some parts of America all sowing is planting ; corn is planted, wheat is planted, etc. The Jews called these processes, or what corresponded to them, "sowing." Trees were planted as a matter of course ; but the roots alone were put into contact with the soil. There was no burial of the tree, and the planting was completed by watering, which was a necessity in the climate. But here also it is necessary to pay strict attention to the words : "For if we have been planted in the likeness of his

death.' It is not in the likeness of his entombment, mark you. In crucifixion the victim was nailed to the cross, which was then lifted up and "planted" in a place prepared for it. In the very next verse the Apostle supplies his own exegesis: "Our old man is crucified with Him."

Col. ii., 12 omits the words into death, but must be interpreted by Romans vi., 7 on the principle that the more explicit texts throw light on those that are less so. Col. ii. is invaluable because of the X-rays it throws into the other branch of the controversy—the subjects of baptism. This it does luminously by identifying baptism with circumcision. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. "Buried with him in baptism," wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead. 'Circum-

cised with the circumcision made without hands," "buried with him by baptism." The identification could not be more complete, as they are identical in purpose.

The earliest converts to Christianity were necessarily adults, as Abroham was an adult when he received the sign of circumcision. But ever after both rites were made to denote the most important fact connected with sin—that it is in the nature. People do not become sinners as Adam and Eve did ; they are born such, and need a change radical in character from the hour of birth. Does the opposition to creeds by our New York orator spring from the fact that original sin is a doctrine of the creeds ? Undoubtedly, except for infant circumcision and infant baptism, original sin or the sinful nature as distinguished from sinful habits would have been forgotten and unknown.

So that infant baptism has an important purpose. Its purpose is mistaken by those

who put it for the removal of original guilt and regeneration. When administered to Jesus Christ it was not to cleanse from sin, either original or actual. In his case it meant a consecration to God, as it always does. Then the qualification came. John did not wait for the descent of the Spirit, he baptized first ; then the Spirit descended. This is the rule ; the exception, if there is an exception, is in the beginning of evangelization when adults have to be baptized.

In the case of children it signifies that they need cleansing by the Spirit and an application of the virtue of the blood from their earliest infancy. Baptism is into the expectation that these things will come in due course from the co-operation of the parents who promise to wait and pray for them. As far as possible, it is the duty of the ministry to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them as an expression of faith. Such and their children are the shell of the churches ;

those who have obtained the heavenly baptism are their kernel, the wise virgins. If the Apostles had made regeneration the condition of church membership, how could they have baptized 3,000 in one day ? Among the followers of Jesus there were four classes of hearers, and if Jesus baptized not, his disciples did.

In the long run, refusal of baptism to children must tell unfavorably on a denomination. Is this bold denunciation of creeds a foretaste of what is coming ? The existence of sin in infants is of sufficient importance surely to demand a rite to inculcate it, and to set the machinery at work for its eradication ! The dangerous results are seen, too, among the votaries of baptismal regeneration which neutralizes the recognition of original sin. Early youth is the period of life when the mind is most readily influenced by the facts on which religion depends ; the story of the Fall and its long sad consequences, the

expulsion from Eden, the death of Abel, the ever-developing wickedness, the Flood, the intensiveness of deserved punishment revealed by its extensiveness, and the seed of the woman who wounded the head of the serpent.

It was guilt which, by separating from God, dried up the generous fountains of the soul and opened the perennial fountains of sin. The sunshine of God which erewhile filled the soul with its love inspiring joy was extinguished from the moment man became a criminal. Ever after the one source of happiness was the world with its sensual gratifications, a finite in the place of an infinite enjoyment, giving rise to endless selfish struggles for monopoly. The scriptural emblem of the natural man is Samson blinded and working in the treadmill for the Philistines. The natural man has a very different opinion, which must be changed as the first step to a return of hope.

“ But now commandeth men everywhere to

repent." Now ! Where is it done with any radical meaning ? The repentance of the Psalmist was so deep that it carried his thoughts back to the beginning of his existence. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Three years ago another of the denomination lights of New York electrified a Montreal audience by ridiculing the divine account of the origin and fall of man, a narrative that must enter into the conception in every adequate view of the spiritual change, because touching the origin of the necessity of repentance. To the evolutionist repentance is an absurdity.

"Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." Offering Christ to the impenitent is one of the follies of the age. He began His own ministry by bidding men live : "He came to call sinners to repentance." Sermons must not be lectures on therapeutics in a hospital where

there are neither probes nor diagnoses. It is the light of God brought to bear on sin that dissolves its chains and begets repentance. Crucifixion with Christ is by the conscience. On sin as God sees it the conscience of the age is in a dying condition ; the conscience of the pulpit is virtually dead. Preaching, in general, in the influential centres is adapted to what are considered social needs, and novels are ransacked to get taking ideas on character that are sure to please, because aerial concoctions of the imagination that are safe not to hit the present company.

The numbers engaged in preaching, and the cost of the regular ministry are something fabulous ; and for all, the whole Christian world is filled with the noise of other instrumentalities, male and female. Piety is felt to be so much in the shallows that special associations have been formed for deepening the religious life. It would be a sin to oppose the good intention.

But on what account is all this turmoil ? Has the arm of the Lord been shortened ? Has His ear become heavy ? The trouble is that the passing generations have shortened "the rod of His power." And now that the mischief has been done, prayers for the Holy Ghost are found softer and more acceptable than the point of the two-edged instrument, by which he pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. But without the two-edged sword prayers are in vain, for in spite of them worldliness and crime are on the increase. It is repentance that needs deepening as a preparation for the gospel and a perpetuated condition of progress in religion. Hence it was that its first advocates were sent forth with a single cry : Repent ; a quickening exhortation needed by every generation, in line upon line, accompanied with the new motive brought by Jesus from the eternal world.

It is sense of ill-desert that awakens the necessity for salvation, and a keen perception of the root of sin. This is made very plain by the language of the 51st Psalm. Jesus made practical use of this fact, and a peculiarity which distinguished him from all the prophets He insistently presented the consequences of sin as unending. As formerly stated, it was the immortality of the soul and its dangers that justified the miracle of the ages—the Incarnation. Were man mortal instead of immortal, such an expedient would be absurd. Hence in dwelling so much on the dark outlook for sinners Jesus justified His presence here.

The piercing light thrown on eternity by Jesus was the instrument of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. What else could have induced so many who had looked for a political Messiah to forego the expectation, and accept Him who had been crucified, if not the insistence throughout His public life on the

dangers of the soul. Next to the authority of God, the great lesson He enforced was that men had souls to save—to save from everlasting ruin. This, no doubt, was the chief consideration employed by the Spirit to break up the power of sin in 3,000 hearts and give piety a depth at its inception it, in general, is felt to lack in the present age. St. Peter accused them of crucifying their Messiah, but the crime could be felt only by those who had been brought to penetrate the fact that He was a divine Saviour of souls. Their faith made the politician and the wordling in them outcast, and they became heirs of eternity.

Mutual admiration and self-complacency characterized the religions of the age in which Jesus lived. Is it because they characterize the age in which we live that religion needs so much deepening? The Keswick brethren are right, but their methods are totally inadequate, as they employ nothing but a bigger dose of the commonplaces of the modern pul-

pit ; more prayers for the Spirit and more resolves. "By the Law is the knowledge of sin." As Jesus presented it it is gagged ; the Keswicks see the ruinous effects, but only as out of a fog. The effects of sin as described by Jesus intensify piety by intensifying gratitude in the saved. The gift of God is not appreciated by those who receive it ; it is undervalued by the pulpit. To deepen religion it is necessary to have a bigger, rounder knowledge of the eternal world.

A tall building requires a good foundation. To intensify piety the foundation must be laid deep and broad. In whatever concerns the mind ideas must leave their mark. It is imperfect work at the start that forces so much tinkering later on, and the later work is imperfect because the necessity is not felt of going back to the beginning and laying anew the foundation of repentance from dead works. There was no necessity of going back on the work of the Apostles, as a good foundation had been laid.

That preacher is not a legalist who tries to raise the dead ; in other words, who crucifies men with Christ that they may live. He is a legalist and a fraud who pretends to save men except by crucifying them, or with the conscience asleep. It is a living conscience that prompts to put off the old man and put on the new. Hence the importance of living consciences in the place of power—the pulpit. A strong consciousness of God, then, and of His rights, or, as an Apostle calls it, “conscience towards God,” is a consuming fire kindling on garbage far and near, and destroying it. It is the business of the pulpit to put God into the consciousness of the worshippers, and with divine help to keep Him there. There will be trouble, commotion, to begin with ; it was through trouble God reconciled Himself to the world, and it is the troubled soul that becomes reconciled to God. It was contact with God that brought the Psalmist to repentance : “Against thee,

thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." In his case it was a renewal of repentance, one such as the Keswicks should aim for. Repentance first and last is not a change of conduct only, but such a change of heart as gives God a permanent place in its consciousness and a mastery over its powers.

Next to sin exposed in the light of eternity, the advocated necessity of regeneration is a power in the world. It was Christ's argument with Nicodemus. By emphasizing it the evangelical bodies, especially the Methodists, have eviscerated the Church of England in all parts of the world ; and the Church of England, by neglecting the subject, has allowed itself to be eviscerated, and has prepared the way for the adoption of baptismal regeneration. And now that baptismal regeneration is the received doctrine of the "Anglicans," two things can be predicted with certainty : continued evisceration, and corruption of the remains.

It may be added that in order to understand the Scriptures aright, the human nature needs to be adjusted anew to the works of God by regeneration. The unadjusted natures stagger at the things of God ; the adjusted natures know the reality of immediate divine operation, and are therefore fitted to accept its existence. The early chapters of Genesis are interesting as the inspired history of the planting of a world, a subject necessarily unique. The continuous history, however, effaces the uniqueness. Immediate divine contact with the first man was of a piece with the frequent meetings with Abraham and his descendents, and with the contact of the Incarnate one, and with the spiritual faith begetting contact with Christians still. The uniqueness of creation out of dust was largely effaced by Jesus when he gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, feet to the lame, and life to the dead ; and it is to be wholly effaced by the general resurrection, a

grand final illustration, probably with other purposes to shut the mouths of sceptics for ever as to the mode in which all living creatures were brought into existence. God has put something of the antiquarian into every man, and He has done much to gratify the antiquarian spirit. In the Bible more space is devoted to the origin of nations than to any other secular subject, and human intelligence is gratified by information on the origin of man ; the intent would be imperfect without such information. The evolutionists labor to make man ashamed of his origin. God is wiser. It is more gratifying to have come down than never to have been up. Sceptics object to the story of the flood, its cruelty ; but who would care to be descended from the ragamuffins who were drowned in it. God gave the race a second start, a noble one.

It may possibly be contended that infant baptism was responsible for baptismal regen-

eration. On the contrary, it is about as certain that faith in the efficiency of baptism had its origin in connection with the baptism of adults. Constantine deferred his baptism till near the close of life, that he might enter the other world with a clean bill and a clean heart.

THE SPIRIT OF THE TWO TESTA- MENTS.

It is very generally believed that there is marked contrariety between the spirit of the Old Testament and the New. There is antagonism between the traditions of the "elders" or "them of old time" and the spirit of both Testaments. "But the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" began the exercise of mercy as well as judgment from the date of the first encounter with sinful man. The earliest saints were as distinguished for religiousness as any since ; indeed, some of them have never been outshone.

As for providential severity, were the world as wicked now as it had become before the Deluge, or any city as bad as Sodom, it would still be necessary to destroy it. The destruction of society will never cease to be the con-

sequence of degeneracy when it has reached a climax. The facts preserved shew that there was not a man or woman in Sodom who would escape the penitentiary in any Christian country, except the one man who fled, and there was little about him to boast of.

Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, set the standard to be reached by the Amorites when their "iniquity" would be considered "full ;" and in commanding them to be destroyed the wisdom of God was seen in this, that any left were a constant source of calamity to the Israelites by corrupting them. The whole world has improved since then, and as a consequence the divine aspect is less severe, but never where justice is called upon for action. The slavery of the Southern States of America was a merciful institution when compared with that of Ancient Egypt ; yet what years of bloodshed and suffering were passed in extirpating it. If whole nations are not executed at present, it is because

whole nations are not criminals of the lowest type.

One object of the oldest Scriptures was to let the whole world know for ever that God took the responsibility upon Him of the recorded calamities. He has put anger into the bosom of every creature He made, and it would be strange indeed if there was no possibility of arousing it in His own bosom. There is, and it never misses its only mark—sin. Ill-instructed men are labouring to free Him from these responsibilities by denying the facts ; but that the foolishness of God is wiser than men appears in the growing atrophy of religion, and in the necessity for a variety of galvanic expedients.

God took the responsibility upon Him by foretelling the events ; but it was to give samples of His government, and not to encourage the belief that He takes no part in calamities when He keeps silence. “ Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath

not done it." He cannot instil evil, but He can control it or prevent or permit its results. Moreover, He is the Lord of Hosts inspiring armies with courage or with cowardice, as it suits Him. In the old dispensation He gave Nebuchadnezzar a commission against the Jews ; but in the new dispensation did He not give Mahomet a commission against a fallen church ? The new religion should have given strength to the Roman Empire, but it brought weakness instead, because by substituting formalities for faith it lost its power. The upshot has given people little encouragement to think that the Messiah, while securing mercy for penitents, has created a change in the divine nature. The sufferings connected with the decline and extinction of the Roman Empire, embracing those inflicted by the Saracens and Turks, came not far short of anything in the line recorded in the Bible. It is of note, too, that they are covered by the prophecies of the New Testament.

In the Mosaic system the Church and State were one. The prophets were statesmen as well as teachers of religion—two of the greatest of them were kings. A church militant was suited to the times, and its success in war an argument the combative ignorance of those ages could appreciate. It was a chief help to give faith in Jehovah a start in the world.

When civilization was sufficiently advanced Messiah introduced the economy which makes two of the Church and State, the depressed condition of the Jews and the synagogues preparing the way for the new start. The church works by moral suasion, and through prayer by the spiritual suasion of the Holy Ghost. The business of the State is to protect against aggression from inside and outside hostiles, and to enforce certain of the rights of God. But it is self evident that the fundamental law, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also so to them," cannot be

applied universally, although also of the "Law and the Prophets." A judge must not say to the culprit, "I have to acquit you, for if I were in your place I would like to be acquitted ;" nor could Christ intend to uproot the deep-seated instinct of the human soul—its sense of injury when wronged. To reform it the world had to be turned upside down by suasion, and therefore the advocates of this new religion had to bear injustice without reclaim. But it does not follow that in a country governed by Christian laws a person must submit to be robbed within ear-shot of a policeman. Nor is a Christian bound to endure any other injustice, except when an apology and amends are made. The evil-doer must ask forgiveness in order to be forgiven by either God or man.

But there are crimes which do not admit of apology—murder, for example—and if one then all the catalogued crimes. Instead of dreading them as opposed to the spirit of the

gospel, it would be well if the "ten words" from Sinai were read with all solemnity at every diet of worship in every church in the world. It is also the duty of Christians to uphold all human laws made for the safety of society, and it is their duty to ask divine co-operation in the administration of justice. The "vengeance Psalms" are not directed against the common herd of poor sinners, they refer to the criminal class, and are related to the duty of the State. As the prayer-book and psalmody of the divine religion, they occupy the centre of the Bible, lie at its heart, and inspire enthusiasm against wrong doing. Sentimental songs of praise are intended to soothe the conscience, and by killing it in most have created the gap between profession and practice in religion. In a remedial agency like the gospel, morphine cannot fill the place of the health-giving pill.

The author thinks it a misfortune that the churches are so generally rejecting the Psalms

as songs of Zion. Some one has said that with liberty to make the songs of a nation, he did not much care who made its laws. The hymns are pleasant singing and beautiful poetry, but instruction as well as pleasure is needed in religion. There is not much gush in the New Testament any more than in the Old one, and the Psalms represent the spirit of both better than any book of hymns the writer has yet seen, and are better fitted to impress the stern lessons of justice, righteousness and honesty so much needed, but neglected. The objectionable Psalms are there not to let the worshipper forget that he is a citizen as well as member of a church ; they enable him to rejoice in the successes of his country, to pray for the destruction of criminals, or, in other words, for a strict administration of justice against such as deserve the death sentence, and for victory over enemies in the hour of conflict. How few of the circumstances have changed that inspired the old

Psalms ! And as inspirations of righteousness are they not better fitted for the remedial state than what is chosen to fill their place ? All other hymn poetry is less or more exaggeration: the hymn books exaggerate one side of the divine character by nearly ignoring the other. The Psalm book presents truth in its just proportions of justice and mercy, as alone safe for the uplifting of a fallen world. According to the Reformers the Psalter contains the Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs of the Apostolic Church, and compared with the Reformers, they who now labor to displace the Psalter, are the merest ends of men.

The songs of a nation react on its people, and the songs of Zion should be of a kind to tell on character. Through goody, goody religious views from which "punishment" has been eliminated, the prisons of America have been changed into hotels, so that criminals repeat crimes to get back into them again. The poison of Socinianism finds its

way to where it can do most mischief ; it works at the core and undermines the pillars of justice. In order to reform him the criminal must be made to feel that he is "punished," and not merely coerced for reformation. For the public safety the idea of "punishment" cannot, must not, be allowed to vanish. It is called aloud across the Atlantic that prisons in England like Portland are a nightmare—places the criminal never wants to see again. This is as it should be, only it would be better if the terms of imprisonment were shorter and sharper. "Jesus meek and mild" employed, probably invented, the "cat," so that the "cat" must be considered a Christian instrument of punishment.

In regard to the value that should be put on some lives, what did St. Paul mean when he wrote : "If any man do not work neither shall he eat ?" The great apostle of the Gentiles knew how to use words, and he knew everything knowable about the "spirit"

of the New Testament. In fact, it was the "Spirit" of the new dispensation who dictated this verdict. The expression the "spirit" of the gospel is applied very loosely. Some think it ought to do away with capital punishment altogether; then, if not in one case, why in others? A man is sent to prison for burglary, and after three or five years he is liberated, to prey on society again. What folly! when God does not oblige society to house and feed a worse than useless life during its natural term.

A sharper justice on this continent would help to instil "the higher Christian life" in churches that are parleying with sin by sympathy for criminals. Probably for the first time in the world a systematic attempt is made to promote religion by exclusive presentation of the soft side; as a consequence religion is spreading very thin and very unequally over the land. What God in His wisdom did not dare to do, man in his folly

will dare ; but “ what we shall see ” begins to appear. The whole continent is covered with societies of one kind or other endeavouring to stem the outflow from the churches. This leads many simple people to think that “ the day is dawning ” and that the millenium is at hand. The machinery of Christ’s kingdom has been perfected by divine wisdom, and can do its work when handled. The “ word ” is “ a rod of power ” by which He “ rules in the midst of His enemies.” The Spirit of God will co-operate effectively with no instrument but His own sword ; but it must have its two edges. In the present spiritual decay and influx of the world supplementary action of different kinds is fast displacing the ordinance of God, and a growing love of ceremonial is of necessity accompanied with an increase of fuss about religion which is mistaken for it. Men and women especially will sacrifice far more for pious frauds than for the institutions of God.

As an illustration of what can be made of the old songs of Zion, the Marquis of Lorne's version of the 121st Psalm is submitted :—

Unto the hills around do I lift up
My longing eyes ;
O whence for me shall my salvation come,
From whence arise ?
From God the Lord doth come my certain
aid,
From God the Lord, who heaven and earth
hath made.

He will not suffer that thy foot be moved,
Safe shalt thou be.
No careless slumber shall His eyelids close
Who keepeth thee.
Behold, He sleepeth not, He slumbers ne'er,
Who keepeth Israel in His holy care.

Jehovah is Himself thy keeper true—
Thy changeless shade.
Jehovah evermore on thy right hand
Himself hath made.

And thee no sun by day shall ever smite,
No moon shall harm thee in the silent night.

From every evil shall He keep thy soul,
From every sin ;
Jehovah shall preserve thy going out,
Thy coming in.

Above the watching, He whom we adore
Shall keep thee henceforth, yea, for evermore.

The " spirit " of the gospel is to be learned from its positive instruction alone. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus revealed the new spirit by telling the disciples what to do. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no truth in them."

The treatment Jesus bestowed on the woman taken in adultery was the same as that meted out to the thief on the cross : He took him to Paradise, but did not take him down from the cross ; nor the other thief, because it was no part of His mission to interfere with

the execution of criminal laws. A man who proves by his crimes that he is outside the pale of Christianity is still under the law as if Christ had not died. The New Testament gives no indication that the intention was to establish a new law for criminals : its emblem for the civil magistrate is " the sword." False views of the spirit of the gospel threaten great harm to the world. Indignation against crime is a virtue that cannot be safely tampered with.

THE FULNESS OF TIME.

On the ground that immortals are in question with the certainty of one of two contrasted destinies, each eternal in its duration, the millions that have departed this life indifferent to God and without hope, forces reflections that fill sensitive souls with awe. But let it be awe. By minds equally blinded through the corruption and condemnation of sin let there be no determination to charge God foolishly. All know what the consequences of a violation of human laws often are : the extinction of life or life imprisonment—in fact, the severest penalties that can be inflicted—no matter what the consequences may be to offspring or other relatives of the criminal. Even on the low supposition that punishment is an economic expedient, who can pronounce what the amount under a uni-

versal government whose subjects are immortal must be ; or on the higher supposition that it is the just correlative of demerit who can undertake to say what the demands of absolute and eternal justice are ? The cords that bind a sinner hand and foot, or the tendency to perpetuate the sinful state are part of sin, and must be taken into account in estimating what God thinks of its deserts, and in weighing the possibility of deliverance. If the stream of iniquity could be stopped, like crime by imprisonment, ages might atone for the past.

Taken the lower supposition, it is essential not to overlook that the world in its physical status is one among innumerable others and linked with them by the same laws. Revelation makes a fact of what might be suggested as a reasonable probability, that the intelligences of all worlds are more intimately in association and destined to be than the material universe. Men will yet pass into other spheres, higher and lower, and at the moment

there is a continual influx from other worlds into this. The whole universe is interested in human experiences ; “ The angels desire to look into these things.”

For religion, history serves two purposes—on which account Providence took order from the first, that its prominent facts should be preserved—it reveals both God and man. In regard to both it creates surprises, on the one hand by revealing what villains men are. The fate of Sodom, moral and physical, is a fair sample of the landing place of the whole ancient world ; only in executing judgment God let men kill each other or keep each other in constant terror. It is also a revelation of God, of His patience, indeed ; but also, which astounds men, He is compelled to be the opposite of the conglobation of tenderness they think He ought to be. With the wicked His nature forbids Him to be otherwise than unsavoury and severe. St. Paul’s pen pictures of the Gentile nations were in-

tended for treacherous memories and to justify God in history. And morals, if possible, would have been worse had it not been for checks of Providence. Efforts are now made to turn the effects of the Gospel against God by making the race out to be better than itself, which shews the necessity of ages of revelation by history.

It cannot be affirmed that the evils of the world are beyond divine restraint, that is, of God's power dissociated from wise purpose. No one endowed with wisdom would put an organism with its possibilities out of his own management by the act of construction ; yet through some law of moral necessity or economy it does look as if the world were out of divine control. From the beginning there have been prayerful men and women anxious for the spiritual good of their fellows ; at any rate, since the days of the Apostles, prayers have ascended daily to heaven for the conversion of the world ; yet at this date prob-

ably not one in a hundred of its population is a Christian in the truest sense. It may be said that the prayers were unaccompanied by indispensable efforts, which does not hold true of the first and second centuries. A large lodgment of divine truth was effected in most countries then, but wiped out at a later date in many of them. What is the cause, if omnipotence is the lever of Christianity ?

The explanation may be found in a rule disclosed by ages of experience, and no doubt resting on necessity, that a state of preparedness must exist for the faith. The unfitness of the nations that did embrace Christianity has vitiated the whole history of the Christian Church ; which, as an object lesson too, may explain why the nations at large have not been converted sooner. Those familiar with the story of missions know how many years passed before the pioneer missionary Carey had the satisfaction of making a con-

vert. The inference ought to be that his field of labor was in a very particular state of unfitness for the Gospel. Could it be known with exactness what was meant by "the fullness of time" spoken of in connection with the birth of Christ—rightfully understood to mean more than the date fixed by prophecy—it could be made out what are the conditions necessary to the general awakening of the coming centuries. "Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." One preparation for the Messiah was a very generally cherished conception of God revived by the Israelitish religion and diffused wherever the Jewish name was known. Christianity so rests on theism that no step in its direction can be made where faith in God does not exist.

The conception of justice as differentiated from savage revenge, which the exhibitions of Roman law tended to foster, would be another preparation. "Justice and judgment

are the habitation of His throne ;” hence displays of human justice must be helpful to the Gospel. Many seem afraid lest rulers should recognize the divine in their legislation, although much of the Bible was addressed to them, especially those parts of it that began the work of creating a conscience—the Old Testament. What the Romans were as instruments of Providence without the Bible, the British now are with it in many countries, pulverizing the rocks and preparing a soil for the husbandmen. So that British conquests are missionary operations, and not an opening of the doors for missionaries merely. The laxity with which laws are administered in America out of indulgence to themselves by the sovereign people is a great obstacle to religion ; aggravated by laxity out of indulgence to the sovereign people by expounders of the Scriptures, making the new trade of revivalism a necessity.

Out of the diffused perception of justice in

Roman times arose a burning sense of injustice in the vast majority. Injustice is the enlightenment of the serf, as the justice of God is the eye-opener of the world. It has been said that people never were more miserable than in the Augustan age wherein our Lord was born. In the long periods of war and of defeats and triumphs peace would be looked forward to as the surest happiness, an idea familiarized by the evangelical prophet; but the absence of fear from foreign oppressors gave the world leisure to reflect on its true condition. In general people were never better off than at present, yet co-existent with prosperity and all kinds of comfort is ceaseless discontent, because peace during the current century has given scope for it. The ground reason, however, is that material comforts cannot satisfy the human soul, or calm its turbulence. When, from experience gathered out of disappointment, men come to be about unanimous in tracing their miseries to

the mind itself and its relation to God, the night will have been far spent and the day at hand. Let any one ask himself about how much money or ease would satisfy him ; and then if he had his wish, about how long the satisfaction would last. There are millionaires who are more wretched than when they were day labourers.

But as the God of grace is also the Author of nature, scientific knowledge must contribute largely to the "fulness of time" and the conversion of the world. Knowledge is power in religion too. It was from defective knowledge that "not many mighty or many noble" embraced the Gospel in apostolic times ; and because God co-operates with fitting means. To such in those days the Christian religion was a vulgar fad ; worse, it was "*excitabilis superstitio*," just as science, falsely so-called, is an obstacle to religion now. The two revelations support each other when both are well understood and especially when the in-

spired volume is fully accepted. Hence it is a good scientific shaking up always contributes to the progress of the Gospel. Hume, no doubt, thought that the time had come when the Faith might be given its "coup de grace ;" on the contrary, there has been continual revival ever since, because the deep things of science are also the deep things of God ; and both science and revelation can afford to be looked at. When churches are compelled to examine the foundations they find them to be resting on the solid Rock.

Failing signally in attempts against the nature and evidence of Christianity, the sceptics of the past and present generations, irritated in mind, have been tempted to attack the Being of God. Disbelief of miracles and of prophecy and inspiration has no valid ground but pantheism or materialism. By the Providence of the God assailed a deeper look has been obtained into science and a sharper look, promising to result in a closer

and more life-giving touch with the God of nature as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and justifying the expectation that the controversies of the age when completed will have their winding-up in a revival such as the world has never seen.

In every direction matter is found to turn an index finger to Mind as its cause ; to a world Builder and the Author of the materials as well. He is seen to be the latter by the points of view of quantity, of adaptibility to combination, and of utility. The quantity of all kinds of materials is proportioned to the necessities of the structure. But the combinations were not fortuitous, nor by law; had it been so, the heavier ingredients would have massed themselves by attraction in a body, and the gases have been left to constitute the universe at large. Chemists will understand what is meant when God is represented as saying, "Let there be light." By setting the chemical affinities at work the

materials of worlds were put into combustion. God did it, otherwise it is impossible to comprehend how unition could have taken place. Complete divine control in the formation of the world is apparent from the proportions of the liquid element, from the vast hydraulic power, from the configuration of the continents and their superficies or drainage systems, from the supplies for vegetation and for conscious life, and from the wonderful structures and chemistry of organisms.

With regard to organization, there is no such thing known as a germ that has not been produced by other germs. This denotes the law of nature ; so that the sceptical have to stultify themselves by scepticism as to nature's laws as well. The attempt of such people to look wise and masquerade as having seen something has been played out, and the reasonings accepted by them, which make the pine tree and the creeper that clings to it, and the hippopotamus and man and a microbe,

developed forms of an identical germ in a world wherein the law of all life is that like produces like, are very similar to what might emanate from a paradise of fools. There is a great deal of undistributed middle in the syllogism by which it is proved that black is white, and there must be a vast amount of undistributed something in the attempt to prove that universal nature and universal experience are pure deceptions. If the present age has not given birth to the greatest satire in the world it must be because defects of education have disqualified men to make use of the materials. Individual men have lost their intelligence and lapsed from theism into atheism, and from virtue into vice ; and nations have lapsed into barbarism ; but every lineament of their brutalized faces and forms bespeaks—fallen ; a progress not made up, but down. That the Bible has had to contend with the rubbish by which it has been assailed during the passing generation will yet be seen

to be a bulwark thrown round it. When men have been taught again to distinguish between demonstrative and probable truth they will realize that the whole weight of the evidence is in favour of the word of God. The reasoning of a sceptic has at length come to be this : "I was not present when God created the world, therefore I don't know it," an open admission that he cannot draw an inference.

To bring the substance of this chapter to its point, were a farmer to cast seed into untilled or worn out fields and depend on prayer for results, would he get a harvest ? Certainly not. Souls in general are in the condition of fallow ground overrun with weeds ; worse, our Saviour characterizes much of the field as little better than rocks, or as a hard wayside. It took ages to form the soils of the world, which suggests an analogy that may not have been foreign to the inspired writers. Until nations, heathen or Christian, become dissatisfied with idols, and disgusted with sin, it goes

without saying that they will cling to them, and a living conscience alone can create the dissatisfaction. In one island of the Pacific the inhabitants were found to have no gods, which probably was explained by the fact that in another they had just cast off theirs, having found them useless for any purpose. Such cases stand exceptional, alone ; the divine in conscience must be the lever of the soul. It is a rule in grace that God has to be asked, not by others only, but by those who need the benefit, to do them good ; and what else but conscience is able to enforce the necessity of regeneration and pardon. Tears and other effects of touching stories are no evidence of true contrition, and cannot be accepted as the new birth. Penitents must come to the judging seat, consciously into the court of heaven, for there alone can they obtain the divine amnesty.

But how very little is done by the “watchman” of the age to bring them there ! True,

there is much expressed dependence on the Holy Spirit for results ; on this principle, however, would it not display more faith to depend on Him entirely and do nothing ? The Spirit of God co-operates with wisely directed efforts ; in most cases the fallow ground needs to be broken up, and no blessing can accompany the seed cast among thorns. Asked millions of times to save men, He has refused until it has become quite common for the impatient to accept what is called conversion for regeneration. Hence the stagnation and growing tendency to depend on specialists, who probably do understand better ; but even they often discover by experience that there has been “ no deepness of earth.”

It was said of a good pastor of former days that he prayed till his knees became like shells. At length the awakening came ; but in a meantime of many years he had been preaching and praying—and there is always

more divinity in prayers than in preachings—and the soil had been prepared for the seed. By the “superior” ingenuity of the nineteenth century the whole operation can be stimulated in an evening or two through a number of well-told, pathetic anecdotes and sentimental hymns well sung. Ah ! where there is no deepness of earth the seed soon displays its vitality ; but the upshot is much surface religion with a great deal of dishonesty underlying it ; in fact, an age of combined religion and grasping greed.

The voice of the charmer charming evil spirits with music and soft words instead of casting them out cannot but bring disappointment. Although, in most, hostility to Jesus is not pronounced as it was in Saul of Tarsus, yet it cannot be taken for granted that honied words give the Spirit of God the best opportunity of co-operation : or that ordinarily the dead can be raised without startling utterances. There was anger in the tones

of Jesus addressed to Saul, a voice of warning intended to send him to the only meeting-place of peace—the cross. A notion is in the air that the revivalist only needs to be “full of the Holy Ghost” to effect all possible good ; but as He is not a spirit of inspiration now, and consequently subject to the speaker, so “workers” may err by presenting their own inefficient ideas. It was when Moses came down from Mount Sinai where the Law had been given that his face shone ; to be truly efficient, evangelists must have a full sense of the justice as well as of the love of God. Lying messages, delivered in the name of Jesus, are calculated to make liars and cheats ; there are Christians and Christians, imperfect types formed by charming the evil spirit instead of ejecting him. To represent God as friendly to the unreconciled while the wrath of God abideth on them, instead of merely willing to be friendly for Christ’s sake, is a dangerous misrepresentation. At the

first spiritual contact there is hostility in both God and men, which brings on a duel in which God saves by overcoming, gives life by killing. "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived and I died." Representations of God in Christ that have no tendency to make men aware of their wretched nature and spiritual death with its eternal consequences are proclamations of peace where there is no peace.

The Christ of the modern pulpit is an artificial being in whose bosom anger was unknown ; one with whom the Scribes and Pharisees would have been completely satisfied ; and not the uncompromising enemy of sin and all falseness ; who looked round on audiences in anger because of their unbelief. If bestowal of amnesty on the narrow theatre of a nation has to be done with the utmost caution, with what carefulness must it be bestowed on the universal scale ? It was indispensable that the Commissioner who re-

presented the Deity and appeared in His image should be a diplomat as well as a Saviour. For minds corresponding to "the bruised reed and smoking flax" Jesus was graciousness itself. He knew what was in man and His perfect nature assumed an attitude that corresponded with the disposition of those who presented themselves before Him. In one point of view He was a Lamb ; in another, He was the Lion of the tribe of Judah. At present there is a proclivity to make Him a kind of Buddha ; a fad that, if harmless, might be let alone, but it is gradually sapping the foundations of Christian character. Jesus "carried the lambs in His bosom," was a tender Shepherd to every soul that inspired a ray of hope ; but when men turned their faces from Him, assuming an attitude of final impenitance, His leonine characteristics were made apparent ; as, for example, to the Scribes and Pharisees and to Judas to whom he gave the sop. It was a disposition which fits Him

to occupy the seat of final judgment ; to divide the sheep from the goats, and to say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels ;" words He put into His own mouth while still in the flesh. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever."

To get a full impression of Jesus it is necessary to make the Messianic Psalms fill up the story of His life, just as it is necessary to put the New Testament beside the Old to get at the whole truth on any divine subject. In one of those Psalms, the fortieth, Messiah prays thus: "Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me : make haste to help me, O Lord. Let them be turned backward and brought to dishonour that delight in my hurt ; let them be desolate by reason of their shame that say unto me, Aha, Aha." Strange sounds for self-complacent ears ; yet not nearly so terrible as the reply to them. Almost from His

day the cities of the Jews have been in desolation because they rejected Him ; and their calamities have been prolonged beyond all precedent experience. So that religious teachers find little reason to flatter “ conscientious ” rejecters and opposers of the Gospel. And there is no contradiction in the prayer at the Crucifixion : “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,” any more than there is in asking God to forgive a murderer, while concurring in his condign punishment.

Among religious people it has always been customary to blame theatres for a large share of the levity and immorality of Christian countries. But were Christ well understood and honestly preached in the pulpits of any Christian city, there would soon be few theatres left, or if there were any, their nakedness would be covered and the shamelessness that threatens to stamp harlotry on the general countenance. The word of God is an instrument of tremendous power ; “ a sharp two-

edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." In view of ordinary results, the words may create a smile, although the word of God ; but it is because the weapon is seldom used except with a blunted point and an edge ingeniously made into a back, with which the blows are struck.

It will be inferred, no doubt, that the heralds of such "grim" times will be men of chippy and stern brusqueness. Ah ! nothing in the world produces tenderness like the conception of danger or suffering. When an accident has happened, the person chosen to open the fact to the woman who has been made a widow and her children fatherless will do it with subdued and sympathetic tones. The tenderest words ever spoken by the Son of God, which brought the big tears to His own eyes, were : "Hadst thou known even thou in this thy day the things that belong

to thy peace, but now they are forever hid from thine eyes." In former ages the denial of God's irrevocable judgment on the wicked hardened the hearts of men and made them cruel. The favored sweetened flavouring and phosphorescent light of the modern pulpit essay scarcely allows the essayist to feel even if he has some dim conception of danger threatening from eternity. God's tenderness for men is pity prompted by their lost estate ; which, ascribed to Him, should be felt by all who speak in his name. Ways of presenting eternity so as to touch the heart and reduce the importance of time except for "the one thing needful," is the requirement of the age. All dangers are future and unseen ; and in fact the vast majority of people, rich as well as poor, are pleased with honest warnings ; even the indifferent like to be stimulated religiously. For example, the higher classes in Sweden, from the king down, were very careless about religion till the Salvation

Army appeared there ; now the Army has become fashionable. Great sinners and impressionable ones are not all confined to the back lanes of cities.

Complaint has to be made constantly of Sabbath desecration ; but let it be never forgotten that it is the great importance of religion which must give importance to the Sabbath day. What is needed now are occasional glimpses of eternity from midway between Mounts Ebal and Gerrizzim. The prevailing understanding seems to be that hearers of the Gospel are all necessarily prepared to receive it, which betrays inattention to the most obvious teaching of Jesus Christ and of religious history, and gives rise to a vast amount of misdirected effort. The good old practice of classifying hearers should be re-introduced and a word of warning addressed to those who need it—the impenitent. Before the time of universal revival, ministers will be all well up again in pioneering work, hav-

ing been brought to acknowledge that Moses is the frontispiece of the Bible, and John the Baptist of the New Testament, and one of its chief object lessons. Perhaps the very shortest road to a correct point of view would be to reinstate Jesus as king and to restore the conception of the kingdom of God. Instead of presenting Him invariably as a suppliant for admission, He should be represented as knocking with authority and demanding access to the heart. The authority of Jesus is indisputable and has infinite power behind it. The Incarnation was not a dethronement.

Christianity had its origin in heaven; its object, immortal souls viewed in relation to their dangers and possibilities. Because the tenelements of undying minds Jesus valued the tabernacles of clay and evinced power to save by delivering them from the results of sin. Even Buddhist tenderness for animals springs from a belief that they are the abode of undying spirits. Real Christian benevolence

has its source not in love of display, but in gratitude for salvation and awakened hope, intensified by the preciousness of the souls of others.

But the humanity of Christians is still a long way from the summit to which it should aspire. The churches established by the Apostles were in an informal way mutual benefit societies, "ministering to the necessities of the saints." A multitude of respectable men, probably a majority now, take a living interest in various societies, Masons, Oddfellows, Foresters, etc., to be reinforced, apparently, by societies of the "new women," to the detriment of the churches, because they ignore a great object—mutual helpfulness. The apostolic church was a benefit society, holding out promises for this life as well as for that which is to come—the unmistakable lesson of the Pentecostal liberality. Viewed in the light of the earliest Christian age, many city churches of the nineteenth century are

palace cars shunted off the road to heaven. Collections for the poor may be large and liberal, but they are bones cast out to the dogs. To awaken charity and keep it burning brightly there must be contact with its objects ; when such contact is wanting, love of display or other selfishness becomes the motive for liberality ; which in the long run congeals the heart into ice or stone. No, the rich and poor must meet together, and in the house of God, who “is the Maker of them both.” As things are, if any poor remain in some churches they are less known by fellow members than if they were fancy curs and the rich dukes and duchesses ; it is the Christianized heathenism of Constantine and not the Christianity of Jesus and His apostles.

TWIN OBJECTS OF THE GOSPEL.

Because "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," it does not follow that all objects of the gospel can be secured by offers of mercy with the motives left out. One purpose is to influence society at large by civilizing it. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea, which caught of every kind." The truth of God can reach crime at its starting place, whereas the justice of man reaches it only after its consummation.

There are graces and graces, common and saving graces, both of which co-operate with the word of truth. They are often so little differentiated that according to the Master it is they who receive the word with joy who have no root in themselves. Honest preaching has great temporal value ; it generally

reforms, even if it does not save. The revivalist, which every clergyman should be, is a co-worker with God even when his achievement comes short of salvation.

To whatever extent religion finds a lodgement in the heart, it should be the truth of God written there ; and, as far as possible, it should be the whole truth. Too great partiality in the choice of texts may edify men in unholy ways instead of reforming them. A too exclusive presentation of the tender side of the divine nature has changed some churches into permanent conduits of Socinianism.

That multitudes outside of the "finally saved" have been influenced by the gospel is an object lesson, shewing it to be a mischievous blunder to exclude the check put on minds that may never become savingly imbued with religion. In the Jews there is faith in God and a conservative influence while the faith is rejected. In the light of what should have

been aimed at, the fact that, in the nations, 100,000,000 Protestants or their descendants never enter a place of worship, might make the stones in the wall cry out. These people should have been kept in the gospel net, and not outcast from it. It is because the powers of the world to come have been kept in abeyance and a waste of sound put out in substitution.

By proclaiming Himself to be the Judge of all the earth and a Saviour, Jesus seeks to establish His judgment seat in the hearts of men. Here human co-operation is needed, needed because conviction is the step initial to all improvement. It must not be taken for granted that the world is aware of its condemnation, in other words, stands self-convicted before God ; and, therefore, needs consolation only by pressing representations of divine mercy. In the New Dispensation John must plough before Jesus can sow. In impatience the wish of many seems to be to

dispense with the plough and cast the seed into the unbroken fallow, depending on the Spirit for results, who cannot give encouragement to presumption.

By revivalism the air should be charged with the sound of the coming judgment, as it was by John and Jesus ; but there is a dangerous optimism in all revivalism where the pastor is not the chief man. The danger lies in the following direction : our Saviour recognizes four classes of hearers, one where the effect is radical, the soil having been well prepared ; and three classes where the effects are unsatisfactory from unprepared conditions. Revivalism, as familiar to the writer, overlooks all this, and by a mistaken hopefulness endangers many souls. Jesus might only mean that the unprepared soils needed appropriate cultivation ; but if apparent conversions are accepted for real ones, the kind of treatment indispensable may be neglected. What is necessary is constant deepening of

the fear of God in minds not saturated with the truth. And the word of God proclaimed in its fullness will sound out into all neighbouring parts through men and women not impressed with the greatness of the preacher, but with the greatness of God. In the early recorded revivals fear fell upon every soul ; it was the fear of God.

But Spiritual death may be left undisturbed by another oversight besides neglect to publish God's verdict against impenitance. The extent to which sin has paralyzed the moral nature has a fatal bearing often on the value men fix on their own moral powers, or on opinions regarding the extent to which they can work out their own salvation. Prayer is the ray of hope. "Behold he prayeth" was the cheerful reply to doubting Ananias ; and conscious helplessness is the stimulus to prayer. Where there is prayerlessness religion in any form is non-existent. In all probability Saul of Tarsus was a self-redemptorist

till Jesus met him and awakened in him breathings of the life eternal. If religion is life, and life in the noblest form, it must come from the source of all life. Moreover, "will" isolated from the understanding is insanity. Religion is inaugurated in the soul by rectifying its highest faculty, the intellectual, and through it sentiment and conduct. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them." (Eph. iv., 18.) For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (II. Cor. iv., 6.) From his own experience St. Paul evidently took his comprehension of what regeneration is. The immediate upshot, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision ;" with all his soul, and heart and mind he escaped as one escapes from a building in which he is surrounded with flame.

If men can will themselves into a state of grace or of regeneration without God there is no apparent reason why they should not be able to do it in the world to come. A conception of this kind works in the mind of many of the lapsed, who as a rule are strong in their own immoral consciousness, a poor gauge of the moral powers. In aiming at the highest results of the gospel, its secondary ones are surest to follow, and the man who improves when he does not save is a blessing to the world, if somewhat of a disappointment to himself.

But under civilizing effects it is necessary to include not only the moral promptings which produce industry and correct deportment, but also those impulses that create a literature and which lead to invention and material improvement. In the last few centuries, indeed, in the last one, the Christian countries have gone as far in the way of progress as the world did since the beginning of

time. Religion is a stimulant of the intellectual powers ; seen, for example, in the wonderful reasonings of the friends of Job and in the wisdom and foresight of Balaam. It is probable that the family of Noah brought across the Flood with them most of the improvements of the antediluvian world, as well as its best mechanical genius. It would require all the art the world then possessed to construct the ark, and that largeness of idea which enabled descendants in future generations to build the Tower of Babel, the Pyramids and the Temple of Baalbec.

The great inventions of the ancients were never made very far from the footprints of the prophets : the original art of recording, the alphabet, Euclid Elements, and later arithmetic and algebra.

In modern times we owe to Christian countries the art of printing with all its improvements ; the steam engine and its applications, in navigation, railroads, factories ;

the control of electricity for telegraphing, telephoning, lighting and for industrial work ; then inventions in machinery, the power loom, the spinning jinny, reapers, sowers, sewing machines and others innumerable.

When compared with the Christian, the non-Christian mind is stagnant—dead. The far-off Asiatic genius had vigor at one time—until by its own reasoning it ran itself into a pocket or corner by putting law in the room of God, and identifying it with God as a development of His own nature. Faith in a Personal Divine Being is a source of progress by the impulse of an idea so great, and by mediation in securing personal divine action. Faith in God gave intellectual stimulus to the Moors. Strange that in the most enlightened Christian countries, creatures hooting in the darkness, who shut their eyes to the divine light of day, advocate a reaction towards the pantheism that has hidebound all the Eastern Asiatic nations and made them food for gun-

powder, or fitted them for subjection to the Christians. There is tenderness, too, great tenderness, in the pantheism of the East, all embracing tenderness for animal life, although one has only to visit the jungles to find out that the tenderness is not reciprocated. The Christian Scientists associate healing tenderness with their pantheism. Christian Science is the road back to heathenism and national imbecility, more dangerous on account of its assumed Christian phraseology. It is Satan clothed as an angel of light.

What needs to be made at once, without loss of time, is an attack on the stronghold of Satan along the whole line with the heaviest artillery that can be brought to bear. Bows and arrows amount to little since the invention of gunpowder. Inefficient methods have left religion in a stationary position for at least 1,700 years. Our Saviour put brimstone into the implements of war which gave His kingdom a footing in the world. The inven-

tion of purgatory has been Satan's masterpiece by corrupting the church of God and making it stationary for good.

It is not at all likely, however, that the nations will be converted till the method of awakening the conscience enforced on Jonah, and on John the Baptist, and followed by the Apostles, has been readopted.

ODDS AND ENDS.

By divine inspiration facts have been preserved from the dawn of history which are memorial illustrations that "there is none good, no, not one." During the antediluvian ages how few could pass muster before God ! And the quality which gave Enoch his standing points an answer to the question : " Who hath made thee to differ ? "

After the Deluge there was improvement through the choice family of the old world, which carried in its bosom the memory of the Flood ; with the imposed necessity of a magistracy to enforce law, by legal process, the new law, " Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," a severity that has never been repealed except where there is a disposition to ignore the authority of God. As an experiment for the race, God began

with mercy for the murderer (Cain), but this immunity was found to be a dangerous waste of pity, as it is still. The new law imposed against bloodshed immediately after the flood suggests that clemency brought about the moral and physical overthrow of the old world.

The facts preserved by inspiration coincide with those of profane history, which make it unquestionable that there is radical defect in the religious action of the human heart. Religious men cannot but be ; but what religions ! Is there a conceivable thing so abject from "four-footed beasts" that some time has not been a chosen object of worship ? And always in moral degradation, for is there a lust that has not been the instrument of worship ? In the opinion of the race religion is the one important thing, and it is the one subject covered by divine inspiration. In the light of history how necessary ! And in the lurid light of all other cults how glori-

ous the worship of Jehovah is ! But there is ever a tendency to declension, and the day may never come when it will be unnecessary for someone to raise a warning voice. A proclivity is again developing to accept beauty addressed to the eye and the ear for religion, and a soothing for an awakening of the conscience. Attractive beauty in worship is not to be despised, but do not let culture be mistaken for God. An improvement in speaking as well as in singing and in painting might not be amiss.

The invisible is the absolutely substantial, and the visible only a demonstration. It became necessary to make this patent to a sin-benighted world. The conception of God, omnipotent to create, with the conception of the necessary evidence, make all attempts to trace the religious ideas of the Jews to nature ridiculous. The logic of the Old Testament is complete ; given the miraculous facts, and the conclusion is established beyond

cavil, a conclusion accepted at vast cost for 2,500 years by the witnessing nation or jury. A suspension of laws over the whole face of nature has demonstrated the control of Him who established them. The conception of the necessary proof is in itself an evidence of divine inspiration.

The evolutionary pantheist, who at length has begun to "preach," is sure that the universe formed itself by its own internal force ; he will admit of no intermittent action or "gaps" such as miraculous intervention in creation would suggest. But his data come to him from the imagination, intermittency being the most characteristic fact of universal nature. There is day and night, summer and winter, neap and ebb tides, rain and sunshine, abundance and scarcity, war and peace, epidemics, earthquakes, famines and pestilences ; and the bowels of the earth betray all signs of intermittency in the formation of the platform of the world. All mind is

intermittent in its action, and mind betrays itself in all human surroundings.

The Old Testament may be described as a record of the practical logic by which the Israelites, an exception among the nations, were converted to theism. The argument is as adequate as it has been effective with the jury. The idea of working a conviction of the theism on which Christianity was to rest into the heart of a nation, and then sending its components out as missionaries, is too big not to be divine. In Christian times the influence of the Jews has been of immense value by its antagonism to idolatry through the interpretation of the 2nd commandment. Not till the fullness of the nations is coming in will it be safe to convert them. The early converts from Judaism disappeared amid the great Christian apostacies. The ten tribes were never lost, but the early Jewish Christians were.

The divine argument makes its start by as-

serting Creation—the foundation of God's claims on the world ; and the latest science reveals plan in the ultimates of matter. Then, no one able to compose the introductory chapter of the Bible would define a literal day as “the evening and the morning,” which is a night rather. The meaning is that each antecedent period was one of comparative darkness and a dawn to that which followed. Moreover, the earth was once “without form,” that is, of hill and dale and rural beauty ; and it was also “void” of vegetable and animal life. It is also true that the vegetable antedated the animal kingdom, and the whole animal world antedated man. It is also true that the body which for ages illumined the earth was not the sun, at least alone. The planet of this planet, now burned out and cold, was once a blazing sun giving out heat and light about equal to those of the sun at present. It was when the sun was getting up his fires and thus fitting himself for posi-

tion in the fourth period of mundane history.

God has rights in the world only because its Creator, a fact "Genesis" recognizes in its initial utterances. Maintenance of the rights of God is the object of Revelation, and secondarily, maintenance of the rights of men. It is done by commands, promises and judgments revealed, thus bringing God as close as possible to the conscience. Permanently it is by prophets ; but at Sinai He spake with an audible voice, and dwelt with Israel, in manifestation, during the whole of that economy. To have full power God must be consciously present with men, a principle fully recognized in the Jewish economy, and by Jesus in His parting words, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." But as the Bible has its chief justification from the future, an unseen eternal future of immortal beings, it was necessary that ability to predict should be verified. Hence prophets were commissioned to keep the conscience

of the world awake by forecasts of blessing and cursing having relation to conduct good and bad. The fulfilled predictions of the Old Testament give full weight to the tremendous predictions of Jesus Christ relating to the everlasting future. Personally, Jesus was the rising sun of ancient prophecy, and His coming, therefore, is the pledge of His own predictions. "Thy word is truth." Miracles also were intended as precursors to manifest the possibility of the great miracles of salvation, including the general resurrection.

The Jews illustrate how it is possible to know God and yet not know Him. No one knows his fellow mortal as he knows himself —by consciousness immediate. Spiritual knowledge by the self-revelation of God reaches as close to the soul as its own thoughts: it is the contact of spirit with Spirit. The Jews failed to recognize the Other Divine Self manifest in the flesh, a matter in which Abraham did not fail when put to the test at

Mamre ; it was by the renewed religious consciousness. The conversion of Saul is a capital-lettered illustration how a Jew who is one outwardly needs to be put on a footing with his father Abraham, and a Gentile needs nothing less.

Here is the essence of true religion, and nothing short of it is, "This is life eternal to know Thee the Only True God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent." And it was not Saul who forced himself into the knowledge of the Incarnate One, nothing could be further from his thoughts ; it was Jesus who flashed His presence into Saul's knowledge, and he did it with Sinai on His brow. Neither now nor on the judgment day can He present any other aspect to the rebellious. It may be added that because God is a Spirit He can never be visible except to the heart. Incarnation did not reveal Him to the Jews, nor can its proclamation reveal Him to the world : this is to be accomplished not by His

re-appearance in the flesh, but by omnipotent spiritual demonstration.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that difference of opinion on this point does not necessitate a difference of opinion on the main contention—the efficacy given to the strongest motives. Overlooking this, and by thus letting consciences go to sleep, has created the proclivity to Socinianism in the Calvinistic Churches. The Spirit of God co-operates with fitting means—those He Himself has prepared. The Bible is a revelation of divine mercy, but, it is first and foremost a revelation of justice ; it could not be otherwise in the face of sin. The Law comes before the gospel, and Jesus, instead of “destroying the Law and the Prophets,” has expanded their significance, and has added new terrors to disobedience. To Him we owe our fullest knowledge of the fate of the impenitent, and the awful solemnities of the Judgment Day.

The conception lying at the base of our

religion needs to be firmly grasped. We have read somewhere of a mission sent to the apes of Africa ; it was not to evangelize them, however. Just think of God sending His Eternal Son in the flesh to a race of Darwinian men, to die to save them from devouring each other ! No, the justification of the gospel is the immortality of the human soul, exposed not to temporal alone, but to eternal dangers. When this slips out of the mental grasp the real Christ soon vanishes, and is replaced by a calf or a Santa Claus. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen," and should be strong in the heralds of salvation. In general, hearers of the gospel are not broken-hearted sinners waiting for redemption ; are not convicted rebels anxious for submission ; and the constant refrain urging self-dedication to Christ can only mean, in many cases, subjection to a drill sergeant, and, on reception of the love of Christ, a constrained hypocrisy. In all audiences there

will be some who are prepared for the gospel. By all means let them have it ; but there will be a greater number unprepared ; out of pity give the impenitent a word of warning, with the eye of faith peering into the eternal future.

The most striking part of every good picture is its background, including the horizon ; if justice is the background of the gospel, at least let it be there and not attenuated to invisibility. In rightly dividing the word of truth, "justice and mercy" should appear in the proportions given them in the Bible as a whole. Our Saviour maintains this proportion carefully, and as a check on the danger of issued pardons He uniformly presents the antithesis of mercy. The "love" of Christ is scarcely what the world would consider love. Because His love was compassion for the lost, the world of His own day was filled with resentment ; also because it did not embrace complacency in its unregeneracy. The per-

fect love of Christ is complacence for the righteous. To know Christ is to love Him ; but there is a conditional knowledge, a precursor of faith—a deep consciousness of sin.

It is the conscience that links earth to heaven, God with the souls of men ; but it is the conscience in action. The love of God enters by the conscience, exhibited, to begin with, by awakening it. The conception that in religion “love begets love” can cover a dangerous mistake. Neither can the impenitent love God, nor can God love them, that is with complacency, which is the kind that might beget love. The first step in religion is repentance ; “except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. The next is faith ; the next forgiveness ; and it is divine love expressed in the hearts of the forgiven that calls out a return of affection. This explains why Jesus suspected any that received the word with joy—it was premature. Yet there is a way by which love can beget love—pity in

the heart of the preacher for lost souls that expresses the pity that is in the heart of God. A true preacher like St. Paul speaks as a brand plucked from the burning to brands either that have been thus plucked, or that are in the burning still. This is the inexhaustible source of evangelical earnestness ; and there is no decree securing salvation apart from means that have a powerful bearing on the result.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Christ devoted Himself for the lost because moved to compassion by an impending doom of which the world was unconscious till the warning was brought with the deliverance—a warning from which the ill-considered wisdom of this age is desirous of sequestering salvation. As in the Law and the Prophets, so in the teaching of Jesus, the merey of God percolates through indignation against wrong, expressed in terms fitted to inspire the utmost awe, the imagery employed by Jesus be-

ing the most awe-inspiring of all. Apparently, lest the impression begotten by the Bible as a whole should be effaced, it closes with a Revelation in characters of flame, addressed to the churches, mark you, some of them those of the present age, when nations bearing the Christian name threaten to rise and fight for dishonesty and confiscation. The world never held a larger place in the heart of the church than it does at present : “ supposing that gain is godliness ; ” nor was money ever so worshipped, no matter how gotten. The reply of a journalist of this city re the rascalities of certain directors of a certain corporation, by which millions were grabbed by manipulation and the use of inside information, was : “ Tell that story to the young men of this city, and nine out of every ten will reply, ‘ What smart fellows ! ’ ” Strange, it was the very answer the writer got from a youth who had lost his all through these fraudulent operators. The chief object of the pulpit is to impress the eternal and thus depress the temporal ;

and to the pulpit belongs the full responsibility for the grasp the temporal has on the imagination of the age. Certainly revivalists are needed, but those in sight do not seem to size the position. Their chief object is to sweeten the mortal life, and increase the importance of money by constant exhortations to liberality. The liberality of the age does not offset its greed, for two reasons: the necessity created by bad consciences, and the ambition of publicity. People everywhere, and especially business men, are forced into competition in giving by the art of printing. A real revival will produce spontaneous liberality as it did on Pentecost.

The Revelation of St. John conveys another important general lesson. There the Redeemer is represented in state, whereas the gospels present Him in humiliation. His winter of sorrow is past for ever ; yet to a majority of Christians Jesus still hangs bleeding on the Cross and continues to tread the

wine-press of affliction. But if it be possible to get access to Him as He appeared in Judea or Galilee, it would be interesting to know how. Both saints and sinners have to do with Him who occupies the throne, and who "walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks." Jesus pardons from the throne of judgment ; He condemns that He may save, kills that He may make alive. "I was alive without the Law once, but when the commandment came sin revived and I died." The commandment came to him from Jesus personally, and so it must always be ; it is God's voice that speaks in the Scriptures, and especially that speaks home, and like St. Paul, every live Christian has "the sentence of death in himself." Jesus was the only human being who ever deserved to go to heaven without dying. Yet he died on a cross, and if death could not hold Him, it was because its penalties had been exhausted. But before the fruits of His death can be available for others, the participants must be cruci-

fied too. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live," which does not mean only that he was on the cross with Jesus by representation, but that he underwent crucifixion experimentally in the condemnation and death of "the old man." The supposition that Christians can be begotten by ignoring crucifixion through an awakening of the conscience is the great modern heresy, one of the most dangerous ever launched in the church of Christ by the prince of darkness.

It may be suggested that the materials of the Bible were selected purposely to impress the endless succession of rising generations. The suggestion may be worth reiterating. Twice in every century churches and the world come to be occupied by new people, entering generations that know not God except in so far as they are taught. To the young at the age of impressibility the most impressive passages in the whole Bible are the very ones kept in hushed silence by unreflecting clergy-

men; passages that picture an endless eternity, fully portrayed by the Master. Who can ever forget the solemnizing effect in early life of such sayings of Jesus as the following, repeated from the vantage-ground and with the leverage of the pulpit : “ For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell ; ” “ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity ; ” “ But rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell ; ” “ But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you ; ” “ But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men ; ” “ So shall it be at the end of the world, the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire : there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth ; ” “ I will say to the reapers, Gather

ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them ; but gather the wheat into my barn ;” “ Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch ;” “ For what is a man profiteth if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ;” “ It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands and two feet to be cast into everlasting fire ;” “ Where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched ;” “ And his lord was wroth with him and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him ;” “ And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven ;” “ But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first ;” “ For many be called, but few chosen ;” “ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer dark-

ness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth ;” “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ;” “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ! Behold ! your house is left unto you desolate ;” “But as the days of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be ;” “Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not ;” “And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness ;” “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels ;” “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous unto life eternal.”

Some consider hope a more powerful mo-

tive than fear. Jesus did not say which He considered more powerful, but employed both. The "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild" shewed His gentleness by a display of pity for the lost, and by diffusing invaluable information, an instruction to blind leaders of the blind.

But in the light of the attitude of our Redeemer, what must be said of methods forced upon our greatest revivalists? Could the work of the devil be more effectively done than by constraining clergymen to exclude the fact of future punishment, the only thing that necessitates salvation? The result has come to be that there are thousands of churches on this continent in which the mention of hell is blackballed. When there is a vacancy, if a candidate alludes to the subject his doom is sealed as a disturber of the general peace. Our Saviour knew the necessity of creating a conscience. The object of Satan is to withhold knowledge from men of the necessity of sal-

vation as distinguished from moral reform. The effect on the coming generations must be disastrous ; because " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Our pulpit philosophers are laboring to make men love virtue for its own sake, and not for God's sake. The consequence is that even Sunday scholars are prepared to leave the churches, when they grow up, as institutions of a moral advisory kind that they can do without. Religious and secular knowledge are often in inverse ratio : it is so at present. First prescription for the eye-balls of the blind—the justice of God.

Theologically, it is commonly admitted that the natural mind is enmity against God ; but practically the fact is all but overlooked. Faith in the eternal has to be awakened by the eternal, always a shock to the natural man, as it was to Saul of Tarsus. The prophetic function of the ministry has been displaced by other strange functions, and the in-

cisive, startling call from the dead is seldom uttered.

In former ages, when the first aim of a church was to prepare people for the other life, it was no uncommon thing to hear the uncertainty of time and its lessons referred to and impressed ; now in many churches it would be looked on as an incivility ; probably on account of expected improvements in medicine.

Nevertheless, the Alpha of the gospel is an awakened conscience ; and the Omega is the omnipresence and universal accessibility of the Great High Priest of our profession, ever near enough to hear the whisperings of the laboring and heavy-laden heart. Stephen was not one of them to whom the departing Saviour said : “ Lo I am with you alway,” nor was he one of their so-called successors nevertheless, he felt the nearness of Jesus, to whom in his dying moments he breathed out his soul in the words: “ Lord Jesus, into thy

hands I commend my spirit." Jesus is not at the far-off end of a long chain, of which the last link, too, is an ecclesiastie. He is "Immanuel, God with us," and His words are ever "Come unto me, and I will give you rest."

A good deal of useful discussion has taken place lately on the material effects of the change of heart. The most direct and immediate effect is an enlargement of the horizon of the mind, now including the Infinite Fountain of all things, the Source of light and love. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen," and it tells on all life as the light of the sun does. Once there was only one family on earth that had faith, and it was saved from the deluge ; there was only one in Sodom, and it was saved from its overthrow ; there was only one tribe in Egypt that had faith, and it was delivered from the Egyptian bondage. The Christian faith has freed all the slaves and serfs of the nations bearing the name ; and it has otherwise added

immensely to their happiness. Careful examination will also discover that in general where wretchedness exists faith is a vanishing quantity or extinct : also when employers of labor bear the reputation of Nabal, that faith is at a low ebb or wanting.

“ The Son of Righteousness shall arise with healing under His wings.” “ They that dwell in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

A quotation from the Montreal “ Gazette,”
July 3, 1899 :—

ELECTORAL CORRUPTION.

The Methodist Conference of Nova Scotia at its meeting this week took up the question of electoral corruption, and passed a resolution declaring that bribery is rapidly increasing ; that many members of the Church excuse corrupt practices and take part in them ;

that it is necessary to preach sermons and give special instruction in Sunday schools against the evil ; that on Empire Day special attention should be directed to honesty and purity among the duties of citizenship in addresses to elementary schools. The need for more stringent legislation was also insisted on, but in this province, at any rate, there cannot be much fault found with the law, for the last Corrupt Practices Act put on the statute book is as severe a measure as anyone could wish. What is wanted is the creation of a healthier state of public opinion, and there is no doubt that the influence of the church and the clergy can be usefully exerted in this direction. Unbiased observers say that there is no other British colony so much under the influence of its clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, as this Dominion, and if things go on as they are doing they will soon have to say that there is no other British colony which is so unblushingly corrupt. The attention of

the leaders of public opinion, whether in the pulpit, on the platform, or in the press, should be seriously directed to this subject, for there is no question that the good name of Canada is in jeopardy. It is idle to lay all the blame on a few unscrupulous politicians. The people who receive bribes are people who wish to be corrupted, and if it were not for the existence of many such people, the professional corruptionist would find his occupation gone. The Moncton "Times" vouches for a story of a father who had just got his sons on the list, and wrote a letter asking for money "to encourage the boys in casting their first vote." This speaks volumes of the standard of political morality prevailing in that constituency and one could not expect much of the sons of such a father, unless they came under better influences than they were likely to get at home. The matter is one demanding the earnest attention of all who have opportunities of influencing public morality.

To cure sin as a physician may cure disease, that is, without informing the patient of his malady, and its dangers, is out of the question, because the whole trouble is in the spiritual nature, its issues depending on movements in the mind and heart. Voluntary motion towards religion is hard to initiate, so hard, that the most powerful motives have to be brought into action. What folly, then, to point men to heaven and expect the intimation to be obeyed without letting them know in language that cannot be mistaken that the other landing-place is hell, and that as impenitents they are on the direct road to that awful goal. Our Saviour could have been guilty of no such inanity ; nor His apostles ; nor were they. When French politeness invades the pulpit, it is possible to carry it to dangerous lengths.

And mark this, that the road to heaven is skirted everywhere with plants of the Lord's planting, laden with the fruits of righteous-

ness. There are neither bribe givers nor bribe takers there, nor evil doers of any other type. Therefore, the responsibility is tremendous that is assumed by ministers who refuse to obey the apostolic injunction : “ Warning every man ” and unbacked by the mightiest arguments supplied by the revelations from eternity. By all means let the eternal world have its full influence over the spirits of men ; its revelations were unfolded for this purpose.

PROVIDENCE AND RAILROADS.

“Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits : he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the satraps, the deputies, and the governors, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the lawyers, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up, and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then the herald cried

aloud, To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye shall fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up. . . . Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the peoples, the nations, and the languages fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.”—Daniel iii., 1-7.

Unprecedented success turned Nebuchadnezzar’s head, filling him so full of presumption that at length he persuaded himself that he it was who should create the object of universal worship : probably it was an image of himself he set up. Such is the range of human madness. To-day there is a crowd of little Nebuchadnezzars who have abolished the worship of the God of heaven within the

sphere of their influence by abolishing the Day He has made sacred for Himself, and by compelling the worship of Mammon.

“Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all the peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth : peace be multiplied unto you. It hath seemed good unto me to shew the signs and wonders that the Most High God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs ! and how mighty are his wonders ! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

“I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream which made me afraid ; and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise men of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the enchanters, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers : and I told

the dream before them ; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation. But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and I told the dream before him.” —Daniel iv., 1-9.

“ Then Daniel whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a while, and his thoughts troubled him. The king answered and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine adversaries. The tree which thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth : whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under it the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation :

it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong : for thy greatness is grown, and reached unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and a holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew down the tree, and destroy it : nevertheless, leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field : and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let its portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him : this is the interpretation, O king, and it is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord, the king : thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and thou shalt be made to eat grass as oxen, and shalt be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee ; till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth to whomsoever he will. And where-

as they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots ; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor ; if there may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar."—Daniel iv., 19-29.

Faith in Providence is fast dying out, because it antagonizes faith in law ; as a consequence it is regarded more and more as a superstition. But the facts of the Old Testament were worked out and recorded and the record preserved that they might be an enlightenment to the world till the end of time. Events were foretold so that when they came to pass they might be a demonstration ; events often unlikely or apparently impossible, that the demonstration might be the more complete. The object was to establish a fixed

faith in Providence after the time of apparent miracles had passed away. Hence our Saviour declared providence to be a permanent fact by telling his disciples that a sparrow could not fall to the ground without their heavenly Father.

Where religion is concerned, the scientists are almost sure to be so unscientific as to take conclusions for granted without a particle of evidence ; indeed, against ocular demonstration. Law ! The reign of law ! fixed laws ! In the world is there anything so fickle as the wind ; except it be the human mind. These are the spheres through which God claims that He rules the world. If man can inaugurate changes in both, is it impossible for God to do so ? Of the latter Nebuchadnezzar and Saul of Tarsus are notable examples. The miraculous demonstration is of the past ; but every real conversion is the direct product of divine power. And what effects and changes often follow the change in a

single mind ! Take Luther as an example. His conversion has changed the history of the world from his own day till now.

In regard to God's control over the atmosphere, let it be noted that the agricultural calamities of this continent are very great, and that they bear a striking resemblance to those inflicted upon the Jews by threat when God was displeased with them. It is high time that God were recognized in such chronic disasters, and that people took them as marks of the divine displeasure. "Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it." As yet the self-complacency peculiar to the religion of America is unbroken ! We are the peculiar people, and yet there is not a product of the continent on which a blight from the Almighty does not threaten to rest.

Especially the little Nebuchadnezzars that control in the railroad world seem to think there is no God they need to care for ; in fact, that they are able and fit to make their

own gods. Yet there is no institution in the world that needs the guardian care of Providence more than a railroad ; while at the same time there is none that shews more disregard of the Divine Being ; and in spite of repeated accidents, which should be regarded as judgments of God, Sunday travel is growing, and among people of whom better things might be expected.

God will yet check and block the railway magnates who are heathenizing this continent ; but he waits to be asked to do it. The world is not governed from Ottawa, nor from Washington. Think you that the prayers of Daniel and his companions had nothing to do with the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar ? It happened because God's people had such an interest in the event as made them pray. Think you if the Christian ministry saw the enormity of converting the fruits of Christian science and art into weapons to overthrow the kingdom of God in America, the thing

could be done ? Impossible ! In answer to prayer God would smash the little Nebuchadnezzars as he smashed the big one : and no one hinders you from asking that the upturn may be as happy for themselves. But whether or not the good result cannot be brought about without misfortune, as broken laws must be avenged.

A decaying faith in providence will naturally be followed by a growth of superstition ; just as, on the contrary, the king of Babylon's newly begotten faith in God ended his superstitions. The Jews were God's witnesses against idolatry then, and they are His witnesses in the same quality still ; and His command to the nations is : " Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm." In spite of faults, from Daniel to Dreyfus, they have been the apple of His eye. There is one thing commendable about the Jews—they work for a living ; but even St. Paul would

be puzzled how to dispose of some Gentiles when it came to the scratch.

MR. MOODY'S INVITATION.

"I am glad to send out this invitation to my fellow-workers, because I believe such a gathering was never more needed than it is this year. Many thoughtful men have come to feel strangely that the hope of the Church to-day is in a deep and wide-spread revival. We are confronted with difficulties which can be met in no other way. The enemy has come in like a flood,—it is time now for those who believe in a supernatural religion to look to God to lift up a standard against him. Oh, for a revival of such power that the tide of unbelief and worldliness that is sweeping in upon us shall be beaten back; that every Christian shall be lifted to a higher level of life and power, and multitudes of perishing souls be converted to God! Why not? God's arm is not shortened, nor His ear heavy. I believe the sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees may already be heard."

It is to be hoped Mr. Moody hears something like the scrape of the present author's pen: if what he hears does not resemble it, it is to be feared the sound will remain over the trees.

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